

UCSB LIBRARY

X-53546



Hans Andersen's Library.

THE
MUD-KING'S
DAUGHTER,

And Other Tales.

BY HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

ILLUSTRATED.



NEW YORK:

JOHN B. ALDEN, PUBLISHER.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Mud-King's Daughter.....	9
The Last Pearl.....	81
The Metal Pig.....	86
The Money Pig.....	106
The Wicked Prince.....	111
Children's Prattle.....	11
Two Brothers	12
By the Almshouse Window.....	125
Grandmother.....	129
Five out of One Shell.....	132
The Girl who Trod upon Bread.....	138
The Old Oak-tree's Last Dream.....	164

THE

MUD-KING'S DAUGHTER.



HE storks are in the habit of relating to their little ones many tales, all from the swamps and the bogs. They are, in general, suitable to the ages and comprehensions of the hearers. The smallest youngsters are contented with mere sound, such as “kribble, krable, plurreinurre.” They think that wonderful; but the more advanced require something rational, or at least something about their family. Of the two most ancient and longest traditions that have been handed down among the storks, we are all acquainted with one; that about Moses, who was placed by his mother on the banks of the Nile, was found there by the king’s daughter, was well brought up, and became a great man, such as has never been

heard of since in the place where he was buried.

The other story is not well known, probably because it is a tale of home; yet it has passed down from one stork grandam to another for a thousand years, and each succeeding narrator has told it better and better, and now we shall tell it best of all.

The first pair of storks who related this tale had themselves something to do with its events. The place of their summer sojourn was at the Viking's log-house, up by *the wild morass*, at Vendsyssel. It is in Hjöring district, away near Skagen, in the north of Jutland, speaking with geographical precision. It is now an enormous bog, and an account of it can be read in descriptions of the country. This place was once the bottom of the sea; but the waters have receded, and the ground has risen. It stretches itself for miles on all sides, surrounded by wet meadows and pools of water, by peat-bogs, cloudberryes, and miserable stunted trees. A heavy mist almost always hangs over this place, and about seventy years ago wolves were found there. It is rightly called "the wild morass;" and one may imagine how savage it must have been, and how much swamp and sea

must have existed there a thousand years ago. Yes, in these respects the same was to be seen there as is to be seen now. The rushes had the same height, the same sort of long leaves, and blue-brown, feather-like flowers, that they bear now; the birch-tree stood with its white bark and delicate drooping leaves, as now; and, in regard to the living creatures, the flies had the same sort of crape clothing as they wear now; and the storks' bodies were white, with black and red stockings. Mankind, on the contrary, at that time wore coats cut in another fashion from what they do in our days; but every one of them, serf or huntsman, whosoever he might be who trod upon the quagmire, fared a thousand years ago as they fare now: one step forward—they fell in, and sank down to the MUD-KING, as *he* was called who reigned below in the great morass kingdom. Very little is known about his government; but that is, perhaps, a good thing.

Near the bog, close by Lüm-fjorden, lay the Viking's log-house of three stories high, and with a tower and stone cellars. The storks had built their nest upon the roof of this dwelling. The female stork sat upon her eggs, and felt certain they would be all hatched.

One evening the male stork remained out

very long, and when he came home he looked ruffled and flurried.

"I have something very terrible to tell thee," he said to the female stork.

"Thou hadst better keep it to thyself," said she. "Remember, I am sitting upon the eggs. a fright might do me harm, and the eggs might be injured."

"But it *must* be told thee," he replied. "She has come here—the daughter of our host in Egypt. She has ventured the long journey up hither, and she is lost."

"She who is of the fairies' race? Speak, then! Thou knowest that I cannot bear suspense while I am sitting."

"Know, then, that she believed what the doctors said, which thou didst relate to me. She believed that the bog-plants up here could cure her invalid father; and she has flown hither, in the magic disguise of a swan, with the two other swan princesses, who every year come hither to the north to bathe and renew their youth. She has come, and she is lost."

"Thou dost spin the matter out so long," muttered the female stork, "the eggs will be quite cooled. I cannot bear suspense just now."

"I will come to the point," replied the male. "This evening I went to the rushes where the quagmire could bear me. Then came three swans. There was something in their motions which said to me, 'Take care; they are not real swans; they are only the appearance of swans, created by magic.' Thou wouldst have known as well as I that they were not of the right sort."

"Yes, surely," she said; "but tell me about the princess. I am tired of hearing about the swans."

"In the midst of the morass—here, I must tell thee, it is like a lake," said the male stork—"thou canst see a portion of it, if thou wilt raise thyself up a moment—yonder, by the rushes and the green morass, lay a large stump of an alder-tree. The three swans alighted upon it, flapped their wings, and looked about them. One of them cast off her swan disguise, and I recognized in her our royal princess from Egypt. She sat now with no other mantle around her than her long dark hair. I heard her desire the other two to take good care of her magic swan garb, while she ducked down under the water to pluck the flower which she thought she saw. They nodded, and raised the

empty feather dress between them. 'What are they going to do with it?' said I to myself; and she probably asked herself the same question. The answer came too soon, for I saw them take flight up into the air with her charmed feather dress. 'Dive thou there!' they cried: 'Never more shalt thou fly in the form of a magic swan—never more shalt thou behold the land of Egypt. Dwell thou *in the wild morass!*' And they tore her magic disguise into a hundred pieces, so that the feathers whirled around about as if there were a fall of snow; and away flew the two worthless princesses."

"It is shocking!" said the lady stork; "I can't bear to hear it. Tell me what more happened."

"The princess sobbed and wept. Her tears trickled down upon the trunk of the alder-tree, and then it moved; for it was the mud-king himself—he who dwells in the morass. I saw the trunk turn itself, and then there was no more trunk—it stuck up two long miry branches like arms; then the poor child became dreadfully alarmed, and she sprang aside upon the green slimy coating of the marsh; but it could not bear me, much less her, and she sank in

mediately in. The trunk of the alder-tree went down with her—it was that which had dragged her down: then arose to the surface large black bubbles, and all further traces of her disappeared. She is now buried in ‘the wild morass;’ and never, never shall she return to Egypt with the flower she sought. Thou couldst not have borne to have seen all this, mother.”

“Thou hadst no business to tell me such a startling tale at a time like this. The eggs may suffer. The princess can take care of herself: she will no doubt be rescued. If it had been me or thee, or any of our family, it would have been all over with us.”

“I will look after her every day, however,” said the male stork; and so he did.

A long time had elapsed, when one day he saw that far down from the bottom was shooting up a green stem, and when it reached the surface a leaf grew on it. The leaf became broader and broader; close by it came a bud; and one morning, when the stork flew over it, the bud opened in the warm sunshine, and in the centre of it lay a beautiful infant, a little girl, just as if she had been taken out of a bath. She so strongly resembled the princess from

Egypt, that the stork at first thought it was herself who had become an infant again; but when he considered the matter, he came to the conclusion that she was the daughter of the princess and the mud-king, therefore she lay in the calyx of a water-lily.

"She cannot be left lying there," said the stork to himself; "yet in my nest we are already too over-crowded. But a thought strikes me. The Viking's wife has no children; she has much wished to have a pet. I am often blamed for bringing little ones; I shall now, for once, do so in reality. I shall fly with this infant to the Viking's wife; it will be a great pleasure to her."

And the stork took the little girl, flew to the log-house, knocked with his beak a hole in the window-pane of stretched bladder, laid the infant in the arms of the Viking's wife, then flew to his mate, and unburdened his mind to her; while the little ones listened attentively, for they were old enough now to do that.

"Only think, the princess is not dead. She has sent her little one up here, and now it is well provided for."

"I told thee from the beginning it would be all well," said the mother stork. "Turn thy

thoughts now to thine own family. It is almost time for our long journey; I begin now to tingle under the wings. The cuckoo and the nightingale are already gone, and I hear the quails saying that we shall soon have a fair wind. Our young ones are quite able to go, I know that."

How happy the Viking's wife was when, in the morning, she awoke and found the lovely little child lying on her breast! She kissed it and caressed it, but it screeched frightfully, and floundered about with its little arms and legs: it evidently seemed little pleased. At last it cried itself to sleep, and as it lay there it was one of the most beautiful little creatures that could be seen. The Viking's wife was so pleased and happy, she took it into her head that her husband, with all his retainers, would come as unexpectedly as the little one had done; and she set herself and the whole household to work, in order that every thing might be ready for their reception. The colored tapestry which she and her women had embroidered with representations of their gods--ODIN, THOR, and FREIA, as they were called--were hung up; the serfs were ordered to clean and polish the old shields with which the walls

were to be decorated; cushions were laid on the benches, and dry logs of wood were heaped on the fireplace in the centre of the hall, so that the pile might be easily lighted. The Viking's wife had labored so hard herself that she was quite tired by the evening, and slept soundly.

When she awoke towards morning she became much alarmed, for the little child was gone. She sprang up, lighted a twig of the pine-tree, and looked about; and, to her amazement, she saw, in the part of the bed to which she stretched her feet, not the beautiful infant, but a great, ugly frog. She was so much disgusted with it that she took up a heavy stick, and was going to kill the nasty creature; but it looked at her with such wonderfully sad and speaking eyes, that she could not strike it. Again she searched about. The frog gave a faint, pitiable cry. She started up, and sprang from the bed to the window: she opened the shutters, and at the same moment the sun streamed in, and cast its bright beams upon the bed and upon the large frog; and all at once it seemed as if the broad mouth of the noxious animal drew itself in, and became small and red—the limbs stretched themselves

into the most beautiful form—it was her own little, lovely child that lay there, and no ugly frog.

“What is all this?” she exclaimed. “Have I dreamed a bad dream? That certainly is my pretty, little elfin child lying yonder.” And she kissed it and strained it affectionately to her heart; but it struggled, and tried to bite like the kitten of a wild cat.

Neither the next day nor the day after came the Viking, though he was on the way, but the wind was against him; it was for the storks. A fair wind for one is a contrary wind for another.

In the course of a few days and nights it became evident to the Viking's wife how things stood with the little child—that it was under the influence of some terrible witchcraft. By day, it was as beautiful as an angel, but it had a wild, evil disposition; by night, on the contrary, it was an ugly frog, quiet, except for its croaking, and with melancholy eyes. It had two natures, that changed about, both without and within. This arose from the little girl whom the stork had brought possessing by day her own mother's external appearance, and at the same time her father's temper; while, by

night, on the contrary, she showed her connection with him outwardly in her form, whilst her mother's mind and heart inwardly became hers. What art could release her from the power which exercised such sorcery over her? The Viking's wife felt much anxiety and distress about it, and yet her heart hung on the poor little being, of whose strange state she thought she should not dare to inform her husband when he came home; for he assuredly, as was the custom, would put the poor child out on the high-road, and let any one take it who would. The Viking's good-natured wife had not the heart to allow this; therefore she resolved that he should never see the child but by day.

At dawn of day the wings of the storks were heard fluttering over the roof. During the night more than a hundred pairs of storks had been making their preparations, and now they flew up to wend their way to the south.

"Let all the males be ready," was the cry. "Let their mates and little ones join them."

"How light we feel!" said the young storks, who were all impatience to be off. "How charming to be able to travel to other lands!"

"Keep ye all together in one flock," cried

the father and mother, "and don't chatter so much—it will take away your breath."

So they all flew away.

About the same time the blast of a horn sounding over the heath, gave notice that the Viking had landed with all his men; they were returning home with rich booty from the Gallic coast, where the people, as in Britain, sang in their terror—

"Save us from the savage Normans!"

What life and bustle were now apparent in the Viking's castle near "the wild morass!" Casks of mead were brought into the hall, the pile of wood was lighted, and horses were slaughtered for the grand feast which was to be prepared. The sacrificial priests sprinkled with the horses' warm blood the slaves who were to assist in the offering. The fires crackled, the smoke rolled up under the roof, the soot dropped from the beams; but people were accustomed to that. Guests were invited, and they brought handsome gifts; rancor and falseness were forgotten—they all became drunk together, and they thrust their doubled fists into each other's faces—which was a sign of good-humor. The skald—he was a sort of poet and musician, but at the same time a warrior

—who had been with them, and had witnessed what he sang about, gave them a song, wherein they heard recounted all their achievements in battle and wonderful adventures. At the end of every verse came the same refrain—

“Fortune dies, friends die, one dies one's self;
but a glorious name never dies.”

And then they all struck on their shields, and thundered with their knives or their knuckle-bones on the table, so that they made a tremendous noise.

The Viking's wife sat on the cross bench in the open banquet hall. She wore a silk dress, gold bracelets, and large amber beads. She was in her grandest attire, and the skald named her also in his song, and spoke of the golden treasure she had brought her husband; and HE rejoiced in the lovely child he had only seen by daylight, in all its wondrous beauty. The fierce temper which accompanied her exterior charms pleased him. “She might become,” he said, “a stalwart female warrior, and able to kill a giant adversary.” She never even blinked her eyes when a practised hand, in sport, cut off her eyebrows with a sharp sword.

The mead casks were emptied, others were

brought up, and these, too, were drained; for there were folks present who could stand a good deal. To them might have been applied the old proverb, "The cattle know when to leave the pasture; but an unwise man never knows the depth of his stomach."

Yes, they all know it; but people often know the right thing, and do the wrong. They know also that "one wears out one's welcome when one stays too long in another man's house;" but they remained there for all that. Meat and mead are good things. All went on merrily, and towards night the slaves slept amidst the warm ashes, and dipped their fingers into the fat skimmings of the soup, and licked them. It was a rare time!

And again the Viking went forth on an expedition, notwithstanding the stormy weather. He went after the crops were gathered in. He went with his men to the coast of Britain—"it was only across the water," he said—and his wife remained at home with her little girl; and it was soon to be seen that the foster-mother cared almost more for the poor frog, with the honest eyes and plaintive croaking, than for the beauty who scratched and bit everybody around.

The raw, damp, autumn mist, that loosens

the leaves from the trees, lay over wood and hedge; "Birdfeatherless," as the snow is called, was falling thickly; winter was close at hand. The sparrows seized upon the storks' nest, and talked over, in their fashion, the absent owners. They themselves, the stork pair, with all their young ones, where were they now?

The storks were now in the land of Egypt, where the sun was shining warmly as with us on a lovely summer day. The tamarind and the acacia grew there; the moonbeams streamed over the temples of Mohammed. On the slender minarets sat many a pair of storks, reposing after their long journey: the whole immense flock had fixed themselves, nest by nest, amidst the mighty pillars and broken porticos of temples and forgotten edifices. The date-tree elevated to a great height its broad leafy roof, as if it wished to form a shelter from the sun. The gray pyramids stood with their outlines sharply defined in the clear air towards the desert, where the ostrich knew he could use his legs; and the lion sat with his large grave eyes, and gazed on the marble sphinxes that lay half imbedded in the sand. The waters of the Nile

had receded, and a great part of the bed of the river was swarming with frogs; and that, to the stork family, was the pleasantest sight in the country where they had arrived. The young ones were astonished at all they saw.

"Such are the sights here, and thus it always is in our warm country," said the stork-mother, good-humoredly.

"Is there yet more to be seen?" they asked
"Shall we go much further into the country?"

"There is nothing more worth seeing," replied the stork-mother. "Beyond this luxuriant neighborhood there is nothing but wild forests, where the trees grow close to each other, and are still more closely entangled by prickly creeping plants, weaving such a wall of verdure, that only the elephant, with his strong clumsy feet, can there tread his way. The snakes are too large for us there, and the lizards too lively. If ye would go to the desert, ye will meet with nothing but sand; it will fill your eyes, it will come in gusts, and cover your feathers. No, it is best here. Here are frogs and grasshoppers. I shall remain here, and so shall you."

And they remained. The old ones sat in their nest upon the graceful minaret; they reposed themselves, and yet they had enough to

do to smooth their wings and rub their beaks on their red stockings; and they stretched out their necks, saluted gravely, and lifted up their heads with their high foreheads and fine soft feathers, and their brown eyes looked so wise.

The female young ones strutted about proudly among the juicy reeds, stole sly glances at the other young storks, made acquaintances, and slaughtered a frog at every third step, or went lounging about with little snakes in their bills, which they fancied looked well, and which they knew would taste well.

The male young ones got into quarrels; struck each other with their wings; pecked at each other with their beaks, even until blood flowed. Then they all thought of engaging themselves—the male and the female young ones. It was for that they lived, and they built nests, and got again into new quarrels; for in these warm countries every one is so hotheaded. Nevertheless they were very happy, and this was a great joy to the old storks. Every day there was warm sunshine—every day plenty to eat. They had nothing to think of except pleasure. But yonder, within the splendid palace of their Egyptian host, as they called him, there was but little pleasure to be found.

The wealthy, mighty chief lay upon his couch, stiffened in all his limbs—stretched out like a mummy in the centre of the grand saloon with the many-colored painted walls: it was as if he were lying in a tulip. Kinsmen and servants stood around him. Dead he was not, yet it could hardly be said that he lived. The healing bog flower from the far-away lands in the north—that which she was to have sought and plucked for him—she who loved him best—would never now be brought. His beautiful young daughter, who in the magic garb of a swan had flown over sea and land away to the distant north, would never more return. “She is dead and gone,” had the two swan ladies, her companions, declared on their return home. They had concocted a tale, and they told it as follows.

“We had flown all three high up in the air when a sportsman saw us, and shot at us with his arrow. It struck our young friend; and, slowly singing her farewell song, she sank like a dying swan down into the midst of the lake in the wood. There, on its banks, under a fragrant weeping birch-tree, we buried her. But we took a just revenge: we bound fire under the wings of the swallow that built under

the sportsman's thatched roof. It kindled—his house was soon in flames—he was burned within it—and the flames shone as far over the sea as to the drooping birch, where she is now earth within the earth. Alas! never will she return to the land of Egypt.”

And they both wept bitterly; and the old stork-father, when he heard it, rubbed his bill until it was quite sore.

“Lies and deceit!” he cried. “I should like, above all things, to run my beak into their breasts.”

“And break it off,” said the stork-mother; “you would look remarkably well then. Think first of yourself, and the interests of your own family; every thing else is of little consequence.”

“I will, however, place myself upon the edge of the open cupola to-morrow, when all the learned and the wise are to assemble to take the case of the sick man into consideration: perhaps they may then arrive a little nearer to the truth.”

And the learned and the wise met together, and talked much, deeply, and profoundly, of which the stork could make nothing at all; and, sooth to say, there was no result obtained

from all this talking, either for the invalid or for his daughter in "the wild morass;" yet, nevertheless, it was all very well to listen to—one *must* listen to a great deal in this world.

But now it were best, perhaps, for us to hear what had happened formerly. We shall then be better acquainted with the story—at least, we shall know as much as the stork-father did.

"Love bestows life; the highest love bestows the highest life; it is only through love that his life can be saved," was what had been said; and it was amazingly wisely and well said, the learned declared.

"It is a beautiful thought," said the stork-father.

"I don't quite comprehend it," said the stork-mother, "but that is not my fault—it is the fault of the thought; though it is all one to me, for I have other things to think upon."

And then the learned talked of love between this and that—that there was a difference. Love such as lovers felt, and that between parents and children; between light and plants how the sunbeams kissed the ground, and how thereby the seeds sprouted forth—it was all so diffusely and learnedly expounded, that it was impossible for the stork-father to follow the

discourse, much less to repeat it. It made him very thoughtful, however; he half closed his eyes, and actually stood on one leg the whole of the next day, reflecting on what he had heard. So much learning was difficult for him to digest.

But this much the stork-father understood. He had heard both common people and great people speak as if they really felt it, that it was a great misfortune to many thousands, and to the country in general, that the king lay so ill, and that nothing could be done to bring about his recovery. It would be a joy and a blessing to all if he could but be restored to health.

“But where grew the health-giving flower that might cure him?” Everybody asked that question. Scientific writings were searched, the glittering stars were consulted, the wind and the weather. Every traveller that could be found was appealed to, until at length the learned and the wise, as before stated, pitched upon this: “Love bestows life—life to a father.” And though this dictum was really not understood by themselves, they adopted it, and wrote it out as a prescription. “Love bestows life”—well and good. But how was this to be applied? Here they were at a stand. At length,

nowever, they agreed that the princess must be the means of procuring the necessary help, as she loved her father with all her heart and soul. They also agreed on a mode of proceeding. It is more than a year and a day since then. They settled that, when the new moon had just disappeared, she was to betake herself by night to the marble sphinx in the desert, to remove the sand from the entrance with her foot, and then to follow one of the long passages which led to the centre of the great pyramids, where one of the most mighty monarchs of ancient times, surrounded by splendor and magnificence, lay in his mummy-coffin. There she was to lean her head over the corpse, and then it would be revealed to her where life and health for her father were to be found.

All this she had performed, and in a dream had been instructed that from the deep morass high up in the Danish land—the place was minutely described to her—she might bring home a certain lotus-flower, which beneath the water would touch her breast, that would cure him.

And therefore she had flown, in the magical disguise of a swan, from Egypt up to “the wild morass.” All this was well known to

the stork-father and stork-mother: and now, though rather late, we also know it. We know that the mud-king dragged her down with him, and that, as far as regarded her home, she was dead and gone; only the wisest of them all said, like the stork-mother, "She can take care of herself;" and, knowing no better, they waited to see what would turn up.

"I think I shall steal their swan garbs from the two wicked princesses," said the stork-father; "then they will not be able to go to 'the wild morass' and do mischief. I shall leave the swan disguises themselves up yonder till there is some use for them."

"Where could you keep them?" asked the old female stork.

"In our nest near 'the wild morass,'" he replied. "I and our eldest young ones can carry them; and if we find them too troublesome, there are plenty of places on the way where we can hide them until our next flight. One swan's dress would be enough for her, to be sure; but two are better. It is a good thing to have abundant means of travelling at command in a country so far north."

"You will get no thanks for what you propose doing," said the stork-mother; "but you

are the master, and must please yourself I have nothing to say except at hatching-time."

At the Viking's castle near "the wild morass," whither the storks were flying in the spring, the little girl had received her name. She was called Helga; but this name was too soft for one with such dispositions as that lovely little creature had. She grew fast month by month; and in a few years, even while the storks were making their habitual journeys in autumn towards the Nile, in spring towards "the wild morass," the little child had grown up into a big girl, and before any one could have thought it, she was in her sixteenth year, and a most beautiful young lady—charming in appearance, but hard and fierce in temper—the most savage of the savage in that gloomy, cruel time.

It was a pleasure to her to sprinkle with her white hands the reeking blood of the horse slaughtered for an offering. She would bite, in her barbarous sport, the neck of the black cock, which was to be slaughtered by the sacrificial priest; and to her foster-father she said in positive earnestness:

"If your enemy were to come and cast ropes

over the beams that support the roof, and drag them down upon your chamber whilst you were sleeping, I would not awaken you if I could—I would not hear it—the blood would tingle as it does now in that ear on which years ago, you dared to give me a blow. I remember it well.”

But the Viking did not believe she spoke seriously. Like every one else, he was fascinated by her extreme beauty, and never troubled himself to observe if the mind of little Helga were in unison with her looks. She would sit on horseback without a saddle, as if grown fast to the animal, and go at full gallop; nor would she spring off, even if her horse and other ill-natured ones were biting each other. Entirely dressed as she was, she would cast herself from the bank into the strong current of the fiord, and swim out to meet the Viking, when his boat was approaching the land. Of her thick, splendid hair she had cut off the longest lock, and plaited for herself a string to her bow.

“Self-made is well made,” she said.

The Viking's wife, according to the manners and customs of the age in which she lived, was strong in mind, and decided in purpose; but

with her daughter she was like a soft, timid woman. She was well aware that the dreadful child was under the influence of sorcery.

And Helga apparently took a malicious pleasure in frightening her mother. Often when the latter was standing on the balcony or walking in the courtyard, Helga would place herself on the side of the well, throw her arms up in the air, and then let herself fall headlong into the narrow, deep hole, where, with her frog nature, she would duck and raise herself up again, and then crawl up as if she had been a cat, and run dripping of water into the grand saloon, so that the green rushes which were strewed over the floor partook of the wet stream.

There was but one restraint upon little Helga—that was the *evening twilight*. In it she became quiet and thoughtful—would allow herself to be called and guided: then, too, she would seem to feel some affection for her mother; and when the sun sank, and the outer and inward change took place, she would sit till and sorrowful, shrivelled up into the form of a frog, though the head was now much larger than that little animal's, and therefore she was uglier than ever: she looked like a

miserable dwarf, with a frog's head and webbed fingers. There was something very sad in her eyes; voice she had none, except a kind of croak like a child sobbing in its dreams. Then would the Viking's wife take her in her lap; he would forget the ugly form, and look only at the melancholy eyes; and more than once she exclaimed:

"I could almost wish that thou wert always my dumb fairy-child, for thou art more fearful to look at when thy form resumes its beauty."

And she wrote Runic rhymes against enchantment and infirmity, and threw them over the poor creature; but there was no change for the better.

"One could hardly believe that she was once so small as to lie in the calyx of a water-lily," said the stork-father. "She is now quite a woman, and the image of her Egyptian mother. Her, alas! we have never seen again. She did not take good care of herself, as thou didst expect, and the learned people predicted. Year after year I have flown backwards and 'orwards over 'the wild morass,' but never have I seen a sign of her. Yes, I can assure thee, during the years we have been coming up here, when I have arrived some days before

thee, that I might mend the nest and set every thing in order in it, I have for a whole night flown, as if I had been an owl or a bat, continually over the open water, but to no purpose. We have had no use either for the two swan disguises, which I and the young ones dragged all the way up here from the banks of the Nile. It was hard enough work, and it took us three journeys to bring them up. They have now lain here for years at the bottom of our nest; and should a fire by any chance break out, and the Viking's house be burned down, they would be lost."

"And our good nest would be lost," said the old female stork; "but thou thinkest less of that than of these feather things and thy bog princess. Thou hadst better go down to her at once, and remain in the mire. Thou art a hard-hearted father to thine own: *that* I have said since I laid my first eggs. What if I or one of our young ones should get an arrow under our wings from that fierce crazy brat at the Viking's? She does not care what she does. This has been much longer our home than hers, she ought to recollect. We do not forget our duty; we pay our rent every year—a feather, an egg, and a young one—as we

ought to do. Dost thou think that when *she* is outside *I* can venture to go below, as in former days, or as I do in Egypt, where I am almost everybody's comrade, not to mention that I can there even peep into the pots and pans without any fear? No; I sit up here and fret myself about her—the hussy! and I fret myself at thee too. Thou shouldst have left her lying in the water-lily, and there would have been an end of her.”

“Thy words are much harder than thy heart,” said the stork-father. “I know thee better than thou knowest thyself.”

And then he made a hop, flapped his wings twice, stretched his legs out behind him, and away he flew, or rather sailed, without moving his wings, until he had got to some distance. Then he brought his wings into play: the sun shone upon his white feathers; he stretched his head and his neck forward, and hastened on his way.

“He is, nevertheless, still the handsomest of them all,” said his admiring mate; “but I will not tell him that.”

Late that autumn the Viking returned home, bringing with him booty and prisoners. Among

these was a young Christian priest, one of the men who denounced the gods of the northern mythology. Often, about this time, was the new religion talked of in baronial halls and ladies' bowers—the religion that was spreading over all lands of the south, and which, with the holy Ansgarius,* had even reached as far as Hedeby. Even little Helga had heard of the pure religion of Christ, who, from love to

* Ansgarius was originally a monk from the monastery of New Corbie, in Saxony, to which several of the monks of Corbie in France had migrated in A. D. 822. Its abbot, Paschasius Radbert, who died in 865, was, according to Cardinal Bellarmine, the first fully to propagate the belief, now entertained in the Roman-catholic Church, of the corporeal presence of the Saviour in the sacrament. Ansgarius, who was very enthusiastic, accepted a mission to the north of Europe, and preached Christianity in Denmark and Sweden. Jutland was for some time the scene of his labors, and he made many converts there; also in Sleswig, where a Christian school for children was established, who, on leaving it, were sent to spread Christianity throughout the country. An archbishopric was founded by the then Emperor of Germany in conformity to a plan which had been traced, though not carried out, by Charlemagne; and this was bestowed upon Ansgarius. But the church he had built was burnt by some still heathen Danes, who, gathering a large fleet, invaded Hamburg, which they also reduced to ashes. The Emperor then constituted him Bishop of Bremen.—*Trans.*

mankind, had given himself as a sacrifice to save them ; but with her it went in at one ear and out at the other, to use a common saying. The word *love* alone seemed to have made some impression upon her, when she shrunk into the miserable form of a frog in the closed up chamber. But the Viking's wife had listened to, and felt herself wonderfully affected by, the rumor and the Saga about the Son of the one only true God.

The men, returning from their expedition, had told of the splendid temples of costly hewn stone raised to Him whose errand was love. A pair of heavy golden vessels, beautifully wrought out of pure gold, were brought home, and both had a charming, spicy perfume. They were the censers which the Christian priests swung before the altars, on which blood never flowed ; but wine and the consecrated bread were changed into the blood of Him who had given himself for generations yet unborn.

To the deep, stone-walled cellars of the Viking's log-house was the young captive, the Christian priest, consigned, fettered with cords round his feet and his hands. He was as beautiful as Baldur to look at, said the Viking's wife, and she was grieved at his fate ; but

young Helga wished that he should be hamstrung, and bound to the tails of wild oxen.

"Then I should let loose the dogs. Halloo! Then away over bogs and pools to the naked neath. Hah! that would be something pleasant to see—still pleasanter to follow him on the wild journey."

But the Viking would not hear of his being put to such a death. On the morrow, as a scoffer and denier of the high gods, he was to be offered up as a sacrifice to them upon the blood-stone in the sacred grove. He was to be the first human sacrifice ever offered up there.

Young Helga prayed that she might be allowed to sprinkle with the blood of the captive the images of the gods and the assembled spectators. She sharpened her gleaming knife, and, as one of the large ferocious dogs, of which there were plenty in the court-yard, leaped over her feet, she stuck the knife into his side.

"That is to prove the blade," she exclaimed.

And the Viking's wife was shocked at the savage-tempered, evil-minded girl; and when night came, and the beauteous form and dispo-

sition of her daughter changed, she poured forth her sorrow to her in warm words, which came from the bottom of her heart.

The hideous frog with the ogre head stood before her, and fixed its brown sad eyes upon her, listened, and seemed to understand with a human being's intellect.

"Never, even to my husband, have I hinted at the double sufferings I have through you," said the Viking's wife. "There is more sorrow in my heart on your account than I could have believed. Great is a mother's love. But love never enters your mind. Your heart is like a lump of cold hard mud. From whence did you come to my house?"

Then the ugly shape trembled violently; it seemed as if these words touched an invisible tie between the body and the soul—large tears started to its eyes.

"Your time of trouble will come some day depend on it," said the Viking's wife, "and dreadful will it also be for me. Better had it been had you been put out on the highway, and the chilliness of the night had benumbed you until you slept in death;" and the Viking's wife wept salt tears, and went angry and distressed away, passing round behind the loose

skin partition that hung over an upper beam to divide the chamber.

Alone in a corner sat the shrivelled frog. She was mute, but after a short interval she uttered a sort of half-suppressed sigh. It was as if in sorrow a new life had awoken in some nook of her heart. She took a step forward, listened, advanced again, and grasping with her awkward hands the heavy bar that was placed across the door, she removed it softly and quietly drew away the pin that was stuck in over the latch. She then seized the lighted lamp that stood in the room beyond: it seemed as if a great resolution had given her strength. She made her way down to the dungeon, drew back the iron bolt that fastened the trap-door, and slid down to where the prisoner was lying. He was sleeping. She touched him with her cold, clammy hand; and when he awoke, and beheld the disgusting creature, he shuddered as if he had seen an evil apparition. She drew her knife, severed his bonds, and beckoned to him to follow her.

He named holy names, made the sign of the cross, and when the strange shape stood without moving, he exclaimed, in the words of the Bible,—

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. Who art thou? How comes it that, under the exterior of such an animal, there is so much compassionate feeling?”

The frog beckoned to him, and led him, behind tapestry that concealed him, through private passages out to the stables, and pointed to a horse. He sprang on it, and she also jumped up; and, placing herself before him, she held by the animal's mane. The prisoner understood her movement; and at full gallop they rode, by a path he never could have found, away to the open heath.

He forgot her ugly form—he knew that the grace and mercy of God could be evinced even by means of hobgoblins—he put up earnest prayers, and sang holy hymns. She trembled. Was it the power of the prayers and hymns that affected her thus? or was it a cold shivering at the approach of morning, that was about to dawn? What was it that she felt? She raised herself up into the air, attempted to stop the horse, and was on the point of leaping down; but the Christian priest held her fast with all his might, and chanted a psalm, which he thought would have sufficient strength to

overcome the influence of the witchcraft under which she was kept in the hideous disguise of a frog. And the horse dashed more wildly forward, the heavens became red, the first rays of the sun burst forth through the morning sky, and with that clear gush of light came the miraculous change—she was the young beauty, with the cruel, demoniacal spirit. The astonished priest held the loveliest maiden in his arms he had ever beheld; but he was horror-struck, and, springing from the horse, he stopped it, expecting to see it also the victim of some fearful sorcery. Young Helga sprang at the same moment to the ground, her short, childlike dress reaching no lower than her knees. Suddenly she drew her sharp knife from her belt, and rushed furiously upon him.

“Let me but reach thee—let me but reach thee, and my knife shall find its way to thy heart. Thou art pale in thy terror, beardless slave!”

She closed with him; a severe struggle ensued, but it seemed as if some invincible power bestowed strength upon the Christian priest. He held her fast; and the old oak-tree close by came to his assistance by binding down her feet with its roots, which were half loosened

from the earth, her feet having slid under them. There was a fountain near, and he splashed the clear, fresh water over her face and neck, commanding the unclean spirit to pass out of her, and signed her according to the Christain rites; but the baptismal water had no power where the fountain of belief had not streamed upon the heart.

Yet still he was the victor. Yes, more than human strength could have accomplished against the powers of evil lay in his acts, which, as it were, overpowered her. She suffered her arms to sink, and gazed with wondering looks and blanched cheeks upon the man whom she deemed some mighty wizard, strong in sorcery and the black art. These were mystic Rhunes he had recited, and magic characters he had traced in the air. Not for the glancing axe or the well-sharpened knife, if he had brandished these before her eyes, would they have blinked, or would she have winced; but she winced now when he made the sign of the cross upon her brow and bosom, and she stood now like a tame bird, her head bowed down upon her breast.

Then he spoke kindly to her of the work of mercy she had performed towards him that night, when, in the ugly disguise of a frog, she

had come to him, had loosened his bonds, and brought him forth to light and life. She also was bound—bound even with stronger fetters than he had been, he said; but she also should be set free, and like him attain to light and life. He would take her to Hedeby, to the holy Ansgarius. There, in the Christian city, the witchcraft in which she was held would be exorcised; but not before him must she sit on horseback, even if she wished it herself—he dared not place her there.

“Thou must sit behind me on the horse, not before me. Thine enchanting beauty has a magic power bestowed by the evil one. I fear it; and yet the victory shall be mine through Christ.”

He knelt down and prayed fervently. It seemed as if the surrounding wood had been consecrated into a holy temple; the birds began to sing, as if they belonged to the new congregation; the wild thyme sent forth its fragrant scent, as if to take the place of incense while the priest proclaimed these Bible words: “To give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

And he spoke of everlasting life; and as he

discoursed, the horse which had carried them in their wild flight stood still, and pulled at the large bramble berries, so that the ripest ones fell on little Helga's hand, inviting her to pluck them for herself.

She allowed herself patiently to be lifted upon the horse, and she sat on his back like a somnambulist, who was neither in a waking nor a sleeping state. The Christian priest tied two small green branches together in the form of a cross, which he held high aloft; and thus they rode through the forest, which became thicker and thicker, and the path, if path it could be called, taking them further into it. The blackthorn stood as if to bar their way, and they had to ride round outside of it; the trickling streams swelled no longer into mere rivulets, but into stagnant pools, and they had to ride round them; but as the soft wind that played among the foliage of the trees was refreshing and strengthening to the travellers, so the mild words that were spoken in Christian charity and truth served to lead the benighted one to light and life.

It is said that a constant dripping of water will make a hollow in the hardest stone, and that the waves of the sea will in time round

the edges of the sharpest rocks. The dew of grace which fell for little Helga softened the hard, and smoothed the sharp, in her nature. True, it was not discernible yet in her, nor was she aware of it herself. What knows the seed in the ground of the effect which the refreshing dew and the warm sunbeams are to have in producing from it vegetation and flowers? .

As a mother's song to her child, unmarked, makes an impression upon its infant mind, and it prattles after her several of the words without understanding them, but in time these words arrange themselves into order, and they become clearer, so in the case of Helga worked *that word* which is mighty to save.

They rode out of the forest, and crossed an open heath; then again they entered a pathless wood, where, towards evening, they encountered a band of robbers.

"Whence didst thou steal that beautiful wench?" they shouted, as they stopped the horse and dragged its two riders down; for they were strong and robust men. The priest had no other weapon than the knife which he had taken from little Helga. With that he now stood on his defence. One of the robbers swung his ponderous axe, but the young Chris-

tian fortunately sprang aside in time to avoid the blow, which then fell on the unfortunate horse, and the sharp edge entered into its neck ; blood streamed from the wound, and the poor animal fell to the ground. Helga, who had only at that moment awoke from her long, deep trance, sprang forward, and cast herself over the gasping creature. The Christian priest placed himself before her as a shield and protection from the lawless men ; but one of them struck him on the forehead with an iron hammer, so that it was dashed in, and the blood and brains gushed forth, while he fell down dead on the spot.

The robbers seized Helga by her white arms ; but at that moment the sun went down, its last beam faded away, and she was transformed into a hideous-looking frog. The pale green mouth stretched itself over half the face, its arms became thin and slimy, and a broad hand, with webbed-like membranes, extended itself like a fan. Then the robbers withdrew their hold of her in terror and astonishment. She stood like the ugly animal among them, and, according to the nature of a frog, she began to hop about, and, jumping faster than usual, she soon escaped into the depths of the thicket. The

robbers were then convinced that it was some evil artifice of the mischief-loving Loke, or else some secret magical deception; and in dismay they fled from the place.

The full moon had risen, and its silver light penetrated even the gloomy recesses of the forest, when from among the low thick brushwood, in the frog's hideous form, crept the young Helga. She stopped when she reached the bodies of the Christian priest and the slaughtered horse; she gazed on them with eyes that seemed full of tears, and the frog uttered a sound that somewhat resembled the sob of a child who was on the point of crying. She threw herself first over the one, then over the other; then took water up in her webbed hand, and poured it over them; but all was in vain—they were dead, and dead they would remain. She knew that. Wild beasts would soon come and devour their bodies. No, that must not be; therefore she determined to dig a grave in the ground for them, but she had nothing to dig it with except the branch of a tree and both her own hands. With these she worked away until her fingers bled. She found she made so little progress, that she

feared the work would never be completed. Then she took water, and washed the dead man's face; covered it with fresh green leaves; brought large boughs of the trees, and laid them over him; sprinkled dead leaves amongst the branches; fetched the largest stones she could carry, and placed them over the bodies, and filled up the openings with moss. When she had done all this she thought that their tomb might be strong and safe; but during her long and arduous labor the night had passed away. The sun arose, and young Helga stood again in all her beauty, with bloody hands, and, for the first time, with tears on her blooming cheeks.

During this change it seemed as if two natures were wrestling within her; she trembled, looked around her as if awakening from a painful dream, then seized upon the slender branch of a tree near, and held fast by it as if for support; and in another moment she climbed like a cat up to the top of the tree, and placed herself firmly there. For a whole long day she sat there like a frightened squirrel in the deep loneliness of the forest, where all is still and dead, people say. Dead! There flew by butterflies chasing each other either in sport or in

strife. There were ant-hills near, each covered with hundreds of little busy laborers, passing in swarms to and fro. In the air danced innumerable gnats; crowds of buzzing flies swept past; lady-birds, dragon-flies, and other winged insects, floated hither and thither; earth-worms crept forth from the damp ground; moles crawled about; otherwise it was still—*dead*, as people say and think.

None remarked Helga, except the jays that flew screeching to the top of the tree where she sat; they hopped on the branches around her with impudent curiosity, but there was something in the glance of her eye that speedily drove them away; they were none the wiser about her, nor, indeed, was she about herself. When the evening approached, and the sun began to sink, the transformation time rendered a change of position necessary. She slipped down the tree, and, as the last ray of the sun faded away, she was again the shrivelled frog, with the webbed-fingered hands; but her eyes beamed now with a charming expression, which they had not worn in the beautiful form; they were the mildest, sweetest, girlish eyes that glanced from behind the mask of a frog—they bore witness to the deeply-thinking

human mind, the deeply-feeling human heart ; and these lovely eyes burst into tears—tears of unfeigned sorrow.

Close to the lately raised grave lay the cross of green boughs that had been tied together—the last work of him who was now dead and gone. Helga took it up, and the thought presented itself to her that it would be well to place it amidst the stones, above him and the slaughtered horse. With the sad remembrances thus awakened, her tears flowed faster ; and in the fulness of her heart she scratched the same sign in the earth round the grave—it would be a fence that would decorate it so well. And just as she was forming, with both of her hands, the figure of the cross, her magic disguise fell off like a torn glove ; and when she had washed herself in the clear water of the fountain near, and in amazement looked at her delicate white hands, she made the sign of the cross between herself and the dead priest ; then her lips moved, then her tongue was loosened ; and that name which so often, during the ride through the forest, she had heard spoken and chanted, became audible from her mouth—she exclaimed : “JESUS CHRIST !”

When the frog's skin had fallen off she was

again the beautiful maiden; but her head drooped heavily, her limbs seemed to need repose—she slept.

Her sleep was only a short one, however; she awoke about midnight, and before her stood the dead horse full of life; its eyes glittered and light seemed to proceed from the wound in its neck. Close to it the dead Christian priest showed himself—"more beautiful than Bal-dur," the Viking's wife would have said; and yet he came as a flash of fire.

There was an earnestness in his large, mild eyes, a searching, penetrating look—grave, almost stern—that thrilled the young proselyte to the utmost depths of her heart. Helga trembled before him; and her memory awoke as if with the power it would exercise on the great day of doom. All the kindness that had been bestowed on her, every affectionate word that had been said to her, came back to her mind with an impression deeper than they had ever before made. She understood that it was love that, during the days of trial here, had supported her—those days of trial in which the offspring of a being with a soul, and a form of mud, had writhed and struggled. She understood that she had only followed the prompt

ings of her own disposition, and done nothing to help herself. All had been bestowed on her—all had been ordained for her. She bowed herself in lowly humility and shame before Him who must be able to read every thought of the heart; and at that moment she felt as if a purifying flame darted through her—a light from the Holy Spirit.

“Daughter of the dust!” said the Christian priest, “from dust, from earth hast thou arisen—from earth shalt thou again arise! A ray from God’s invisible sun shall stream on thee. No soul shall be lost. But far off is the time when life takes flight into eternity. I come from the land of the dead. Thou also shalt once pass through the dark valley into yon lofty realms of brightness, where grace and perfection dwell. I shall not guide thee now to Hedeby for Christian baptism. First must thou disperse the slimy surface over the deep morass, draw up the living root of thy life and thy cradle, and perform thy appointed task, ere thou darest to seek the holy rite.”

And he lifted her up on the horse, and gave her a golden censer like those she had formerly seen at the Viking’s castle; and strong was the perfume which issued from it. The open

wound on the forehead of the murdered man shone like a diadem of brilliants. He took the cross from the grave, and raised it high above him; then away they went through the air, away over the rustling woods, away over the mountains where the giant heroes are buried, sitting on the slaughtered steed. Still onward the phantom forms pursued their way; and in the clear moonlight glittered the gold circlet round their brows, and the mantle fluttered in the breeze. The magic dragon, who was watching over his treasures, raised his head and gazed at them. The hill-dwarfs peeped out from their mountain recesses and plough-furrows. There were swarms of them, with red, blue, and green lights, that looked like the numerous sparks in the ashes of newly-burned paper.

Away over forest and heath, over limpid streams and stagnant pools, they hastened towards the "wild morass," and over it they flew in wide circles. The Christian priest held aloft the cross, which looked as dazzling as burnished gold, and as he did so he chanted the mass hymns. Little Helga sang with him as a child follows its mother's song. She swung the censer about as if before the altar, and there came a perfume so strong, so powerful in its effect,

that it caused the reeds and sedges to blossom every sprout shot up from the deep bottom—every thing that had life raised itself up; and with the rest arose a mass of water-lilies, which looked like a carpet of embroidered flowers. Upon it lay a sleeping female, young and beautiful. Helga thought she beheld herself mirrored in the calm water; but it was her mother whom she saw—the mud-king's wife—the princess from the banks of the Nile.

The dead Christian priest prayed that the sleeper might be lifted upon the horse. At first the latter sank under the additional burden, as if its body were but a winding-sheet fluttering in the wind; but the sign of the cross gave strength to the airy phantom, and all three rode on it to the solid ground.

Then crowed the cock at the Viking's castle, and the apparitions seemed to disappear in a mist, which was wafted away by the wind; but the mother and daughter stood together

"Is that myself I behold in the deep water?" exclaimed the mother.

"Is that myself I see on the shining surface?" said the daughter.

And they approached each other till form met form in a warm embrace, and wildly the

mother's heart beat when she perceived the truth.

"My child! my heart's own flower! my lotus from the watery deep!"

And she encircled her daughter with her arm, and wept. Her tears caused a new sensation to Helga—they were the baptism of love for her.

"I came hither in the magic disguise of a swan, and I threw it off," said the mother. "I sank through the swaying mire deep into the mud of the morass, which, like a wall, closed around me; but soon I perceived that I was in a fresher stream—some power drew me deeper and still deeper down. I felt my eyelids heavy with sleep—I slumbered and I dreamed. I thought that I was again in the interior of the Egyptian pyramid, but before me still stood the heaving alder trunk that had so terrified me on the surface of the morass. I saw the cracks in the bark, and they changed their appearance, and became hieroglyphics. It was the mummy's coffin I was looking at; it burst open, and out issued from it the monarch of a thousand years ago—the mummy form, black as pitch, dark and shining as a wood-snail, or as that thick slimy mud. It was the mud-king,

or the mummy of the pyramids; I knew not which. He threw his arms around me, and I felt as if I were dying. I only felt that I was alive again when I found something warm on my breast, and there a little bird was flapping with its wings, twittering and singing. It flew from my breast high up in the dark, heavy space; but a long green string bound it still to me. I heard and I comprehended its tones and its longing: 'Freedom! Sunshine! To the father!' Then I thought of my father in my distant home, that dear sunny land—my life, my affection—and I loosened the cord, and let it flutter away home to my father. Since that hour I have not dreamed. I have slept a long, dark, heavy sleep until now, when the strange sounds and perfume awoke me and set me free."

That green tie between the mother's heart and the bird's wings, where now did it flutter? what now had become of it? The stork alone had seen it. The cord was the green stem; the knot was the shining flower—the cradle for that child who now had grown up in beauty, and again rested near her mother's heart.

And as they stood there embracing each other the stork-father flew in circles round them, has

tened back to his nest, took from it the magic feather disguises that had been hidden away for so many years, cast one down before each of them, and then joined them, as they raised themselves from the ground like two white swans.

“Let us now have some chat,” said the stork father, “now we understand each other’s language, even though one bird’s beak is not exactly made after the pattern of another’s. It is most fortunate that you came to-night; to-morrow we should all have been away—the mother, the young ones, and myself. We are off to the south. Look at me! I am an old friend from the country where the Nile flows; and so is the mother, though there is more kindness in her heart than in her tongue. She always believed that the princess would make her escape. The young ones and I brought these swan garbs up here. Well, how glad I am, and how fortunate it is that I am here still! At dawn of day we shall take our departure—a large party of storks. We shall fly foremost, and if you will follow us you will not miss the way. The young ones and myself will have an eye to you.”

“And the lotus-flower I was to have brought,” said the Egyptian princess; “it shall

go within the swan disguise, by my side, and I shall have my heart's darling with me. Then homewards—homewards!”

Then Helga said that she could not leave the Danish land until she had once more seen her foster-mother, the Viking's excellent wife. To Helga's thoughts arose every pleasing recollection, every kind word, even every tear her adopted mother had shed on her account; and, at that moment, she felt that she almost loved that mother best.

“Yes, we must go to the Viking's castle,” said the stork; “there my young ones and their mother await me. How they will stare! The mother does not speak much; but, though she is rather abrupt, she means well. I will presently make a little noise, that she may know we are coming.”

And he clattered with his bill as he and the swans flew close to the Viking's castle.

Within in it all were lying in deep sleep. The Viking's wife had retired late to rest: she lay in anxious thought about little Helga, who now for full three days and nights had disappeared along with the Christian priest: she had probably assisted him in his escape, for it was her horse that was missing from the stables

By what power had all this been accomplished? The Viking's wife thought upon the wondrous works she had heard had been performed by the immaculate Christ, and by those who believed on Him and followed Him. Her changing thoughts assumed the shapes of life in her dreams; she fancied she was still awake, lost in deep reflection; she imagined that a storm arose—that she heard the sea roaring in the east and in the west, the waves dashing from the Kattegat and the North Sea; the hideous serpents which encircled the earth in the depths of the ocean struggling in deadly combat. It was the night of the gods—RAGNAROK, as the heathens called the last hour, when all should be changed, even the high gods themselves. The reverberating horn sounded, and forth, over the rainbow,* rode the gods, clad in steel, to fight the final battle; before them flew the winged Valkyries, and the rear was brought up by the shades of the dead giant-warriors; the whole atmosphere around them was illuminated by the northern lights, but darkness conquered all—it was an awful hour!

*The Bridge of Heaven in the fables of the Scandinavian mythology.—*Trans.*

And near the terrified Viking's wife sat upon the floor little Helga in the ugly disguise of the frog; and she shivered and worked her way up to her foster-mother, who took her in her lap, and, disgusting as she was in that form, lovingly caressed her. The air was filled with the sounds of the clashing of swords, the blows of clubs, the whizzing of arrows, like a violent hailstorm. The time was come when heaven and earth should be destroyed, the stars should fall, and all be swallowed up below in Surtur's fire; but a new earth and a new heaven she knew were to come; the corn was to wave where the sea now rolled over the golden sands; the unknown God at length reigned; and to him ascended Baldur, the mild, the lovable, released from the kingdom of death. He came; and the Viking's wife beheld him: she recognized his countenance: it was that of the captive Christian priest. "Immaculate Christ!" she cried aloud; and whilst uttering this holy name she impressed a kiss upon the ugly brow of the frog-child. Then fell the magic disguise, and Helga stood before her in all her radiant beauty, gentle as she had never looked before, and with speaking eyes. She kissed her foster-mother's hands, blessed her for

all the care and kindness which she, in the days of distress and trial, had lavished upon her, thanked her for the thoughts with which she had inspired her mind—thanked her for mentioning *that name* which she now repeated, “Immaculate Christ!” and then lifting herself up in the suddenly adopted shape of a graceful swan, little Helga spread her wings widely out with the rustling sound of a flock of birds of passage on the wing, and in another moment she was gone.

The Viking’s wife awoke, and on the outside of her casement were to be heard the same rustling and flapping of wings. It was the time, she knew, when the storks generally took their departure; it was them she heard. She wished to see them once more before their journey to the south, and bid them farewell. She got up, went out on the balcony, and then she saw, on the roof of an adjoining outhouse, stork upon stork, while all around the place, above the highest trees, flew crowds of them, wheeling in large circles; but below, on the brink of the well, where little Helga had but so lately often sat, and frightened her with her wild actions, sat now two swans, looking up at her with expressive eyes; and she remem-

bered her dream, which seemed to her almost a reality. She thought of Helga in the appearance of a swan; she thought of the Christian priest, and felt a strange gladness in her heart.

The swans fluttered their wings and bowed their necks, as if they were saluting her; and the Viking's wife opened her arms, as if she understood them, and smiled amidst her tears and manifold thoughts.

Then, with a clattering of bills and a noise of wings, the storks all turned towards the south to commence their long journey.

"We will not wait any longer for the swans," said the stork-mother. "If they choose to go with us, they must come at once; we cannot be lingering here till the plovers begin their flight. It is pleasant to travel as we do in a family party, not like the chaffinches and strutting cocks. Among their species the males fly by themselves, and the females by themselves: that, to say the least of it, is not at all seemly. What a miserable sound the stroke of the swans' wings has compared with ours!"

"Every one flies in his own way," said the stork-father. "Swans fly slantingly, cranes in triangles, and plovers in serpentine windings."

"Name not serpents or snakes when we are about to fly up yonder," said the stork-mother. "It will only make the young ones long for a sort of food which they can't get just now."

"Are these the high hills, beneath yonder, of which I have heard?" asked Helga, in the disguise of a swan.

"These are thunder-clouds driving under us," replied her mother.

"What are these white clouds that seem so stationary?" asked Helga.

"These are the mountains covered with everlasting snow that thou seest," said her mother; and they flew over the Alps towards the blue Mediterranean.

"There is Africa! there is Egypt!" cried in joyful accents, under her swan disguise, the daughter of the Nile, as high up in the air she descried, like a whitish-yellow billow-shaped streak, her native soil.

The storks also saw it, and quickened their flight.

"I smell the mud of the Nile and the wet frogs," exclaimed the stork-mother. "It makes my mouth water. Yes, now ye shall have nice things to eat, and ye shall see the marabout

the ibis, and the crane: they are all related to our family, but are not nearly so handsome as we are. They think a great deal, however, of themselves, particularly the ibis: he has been spoiled by the Egyptians, who make a mummy of him, and stuff him with aromatic herbs. I would rather be stuffed with living frogs; and that is what ye would all like also, and what ye shall be. Better a good dinner when one is living, than to be made a grand show of when one is dead. That is what I think, and I know I am right."

"The storks have returned," was told in the splendid house on the banks of the Nile, where, within the open hall, upon soft cushions, covered with a leopard's skin, the king lay, neither living nor dead, hoping for the lotus-flower from the deep morass of the north. His kindred and his attendants were standing around him.

And into the hall flew two magnificent white swans—they had arrived with the storks. They cast off the dazzling magic feather garbs, and there stood two beautiful women, as like each other as two drops of water. They leaned over the pallid, faded old man; they threw back their long hair; and, as little Helga bowed

over her grandfather, his cheeks flushed, his eyes sparkled, life returned to his stiffened limbs. The old man rose hale and hearty; his daughter and his grand-daughter pressed him in their arms, as if in a glad morning salutation after a long heavy dream.

And there was joy throughout the palace, and in the storks' nest also; but *there* the joy was principally for the good food, the swarms of nice frogs; and whilst the learned noted down in haste, and very carelessly, the history of the two princesses and of the lotus-flower as an important event, and a blessing to the royal house, and to the country in general, the old storks related the history in their own way to their own family; but not until they had all eaten enough, else these would have had other things to think of than listening to any story.

"Now thou wilt be somebody," whispered the stork-mother; "it is only reasonable to expect that."

"Oh! what should *I* be?" said the stork father. "And what have *I* done? Nothing!"

"Thou hast done more than all the others put together. Without thee and the young

ones the two princesses would never have seen Egypt again, or cured the old man. Thou wilt be nothing ! Thou shouldst, at the very least, be appointed court doctor, and have a title bestowed on thee, which our young ones would inherit, and their little ones after them. Thou dost look already exactly like an Egyptian doctor in my eyes."

The learned and the wise lectured upon "the fundamental notion," as they called it, which pervaded the whole tissue of events. "Love bestows life." Then they expounded their meaning in this manner :

"The warm sunbeam was the Egyptian princess ; she descended to the mud-king, and from their meeting sprang a flower—"

"I cannot exactly repeat the words," said the stork-father, who had been listening to the discussion from the roof, and was now telling in his nest what he had heard. "What they said was not easy of comprehension, but it was so exceedingly wise that they were immediately rewarded with rank and marks of distinction. Even the prince's head cook got a handsome present—that was, doubtless, for having prepared the repast."

"And what didst thou get?" asked the

stork-mother. "They had no right to overlook the most important actor in the affair, and that was thyself. The learned only babbled about the matter. But so it is always."

Late at night, when the now happy household reposed in peaceful slumbers, there was one who was still awake; and that was not the stork-father, although he was standing upon his nest on one leg, and dozing like a sentry. No; little Helga was awake, leaning over the balcony, and gazing through the clear air at the large blazing stars, larger and brighter than she had ever seen them in the north, and yet the same. She was thinking upon the Viking's wife near "the wild morass"—upon her foster-mother's mild eyes—upon the tears she had shed over the poor frog-child, who was now standing under the light of the glorious stars, on the banks of the Nile, in the soft spring air. She thought of the love in the heathen woman's breast—the love she had shown towards an unfortunate being, who in human form was as vicious as a wild beast, and in the form of a
noxious animal was horrible to look upon or to touch. She gazed at the glittering stars, and thought of the shining circle on the brow of the dead priest, when they flew over the forest

and the morass. Tones seemed again to sound on her ears—words she had heard spoken when they rode together, and she sat like an evil spirit there—words about the great source of love, the highest love, that which included all races and all generations. Yes, what was not bestowed, won, obtained? Helga's thoughts embraced by day, by night, the whole of her good fortune; she stood contemplating it like a child who turns precipitately from the giver to the beautiful gifts; she passed on to the increasing happiness which might come, and would come. Higher and higher rose her thoughts, till she so lost herself in the dreams of future bliss that she forgot the Giver of all good. It was the superabundance of youthful spirits which caused her imagination to take so bold a flight. Her eyes were flashing with her thoughts, when suddenly a loud noise in the court beneath recalled her to mundane objects. She saw there two enormous ostriches running angrily round in a narrow circle. She had never before seen these large heavy birds, who looked as if their wings were clipped; and when she asked what had happened to them, she heard for the first time the Egyptian legend about the ostrich.

Its race had once been beautiful, its wings broad and strong. Then one evening the largest forest birds said to it, "Brother, shall we fly to-morrow, God willing, to the river, and drink?" And the ostrich answered, "Yes I will." At dawn they flew away, first up towards the sun, higher and higher, the ostrich far before the others. It flew on in its pride up towards the light; it relied upon its own strength, not upon the Giver of that strength; it did not say, "God willing." Then the avenging angel drew aside the veil from the streaming flames, and in that moment the bird's wings were burnt, and he sank in wretchedness to the earth. Neither he nor his species were ever afterwards able to raise themselves up in the air. They fly timidly—hurry along in a narrow space; they are a warning to mankind in all our thoughts and all our enterprises to say, "God willing."

And Helga humbly bowed her head, looked at the ostriches rushing past, saw their surprise and their simple joy at the sight of their own large shadows on the white wall, and more serious thoughts took possession of her mind, adding to her present happiness—inspiring brighter hopes for the future. What was yet

to happen? The best for her, "God will ing."

In the early spring, when the storks were about to go north again, Helga took from her arm a golden bracelet, scratched her name upon it, beckoned to the stork-father, hung the gold band round his neck, and bade him carry it to the Viking's wife, who would thereby know that her adopted daughter lived, was happy, and remembered her.

"It is heavy to carry," thought the stork, when it was hung round his neck; "but gold and honor must not be flung away upon the high road. The stork brings luck—they must admit that up yonder."

"Thou layest gold, and I lay eggs," said the stork-mother; "but thou layest only once, and I lay every year. But neither of us gets any thanks, which is very vexatious."

"One knows, however, that one has done one's duty," said the stork-father.

"But that can't be hung up to be seen and lauded; and if it could be, fine words butter no parsnips."

So they flew away.

The little nightingale that sang upon the

tamarind-tree would also soon be going north, up yonder near "the wild morass." Helga had often heard it—she would send a message by it ; for, since she had flown in the magical disguise of the swan, she had often spoken to the storks and the swallows. The nightingale would therefore understand her, and she prayed it to fly to the beech wood upon the Jutland peninsula, where the tomb of stone and branches had been erected. She asked it to beg all the little birds to protect the sacred spot, and frequently to sing over it.

And the nightingale flew away, and time flew also.

And the eagle stood upon a pyramid, and looked in the autumn on a stately procession with richly-laden camels, with armed and splendidly equipped men on snorting Arabian horses shining white like silver, with red trembling nostrils, with long thick manes hanging down to their slender legs. Rich guests—a royal Arabian prince, handsome as a prince should be—approached the gorgeous palace where the storks' nests stood empty. Those who dwelt in these nests were away in the far north, but they were soon to return ; and they

arrived on the very day that was most marked by joy and festivities. It was a wedding feast and the beautiful Helga, clad in silk and jewels, was the bride. The bridegroom was the young prince from Arabia. They sat at the upper end of the table, between her mother and grandfather.

But she looked not at the bridegroom's bronzed and manly cheek, where the dark beard curled. She looked not at his black eyes, so full of fire, that were fastened upon her. She gazed outwards upon the bright twinkling stars that glittered far away in the heavens.

Then a loud rustling of strong wings was heard in the air. The storks had come back; and the old pair, fatigued as they were after their journey, and much in need of rest, flew immediately down to the rails of the verandah, for they knew what festival was going on. They had heard already at the frontiers that Helga had had them painted upon the wall, introducing them into her own history.

"It was a kind thought of hers," said the stork-father.

"It is very little," said the stork-mother
"She could hardly have done less."

And when Helga saw them she rose, and went out into the verandah to stroke their backs. The old couple bowed their necks, and the youngest little ones felt themselves much honored by being so well received.

And Helga looked up towards the shining stars, that glittered more and more brilliantly; and between them and her she beheld in the air a transparent form. It floated nearer to her. It was the dead Christian priest, who had also come to her bridal solemnity—come from the kingdom of heaven.

“The glory and beauty up yonder far exceed all that is known on earth,” he said.

And Helga pleaded softly, earnestly, that but for one moment she might be allowed to ascend up thither, and to cast one single glance on those heavenly scenes.

Then he raised her amidst splendor and magnificence, and a stream of delicious music. It was not around her only that all seemed to be brightness and music, but the light seemed to stream in her soul, and the sweet tones to be echoed there. Words cannot describe what she felt.

“We must now return,” he said: “thou wilt be missed.”

"Only one more glance!" she entreated
"Only one short minute!"

"We must return to earth—the guests are all departing."

"But one more glance—the last!"

And Helga stood again in the verandah, but all the torches outside were extinguished; all the light in the bridal saloon was gone; the storks were gone; no guests were to be seen—no bridegroom. All had vanished in those three short minutes.

Then Helga felt anxious. She wandered through the vast empty halls—there slept foreign soldiers. She opened the side door which led to her own chambers, and, as she fancied she was entering them, she found herself in the garden: it had not stood there. Red streaks crossed the skies; it was the dawn of day.

Only three minutes in heaven, and a whole night on earth had passed away.

Then she perceived the storks. She called to them, spoke their language, and the old stork turned his head towards her, listened, and drew near.

"Thou dost speak our language," said he.
"What wouldst thou? Whence comest thou, thou foreign maiden?"

"It is I—it is Helga! Dost thou not know me? Three minutes ago we were talking together in the verandah."

"That is a mistake," said the stork. "Thou must have dreamt this."

"No, no," she said, and reminded him of the Viking's castle, "the wild morass," the journey thence.

Then the old stork winked with his eyes.

"That is a very old story; I have heard it from my great-great-grandmother's time. Yes, truly there was once in Egypt a princess from the Danish land; but she disappeared on the evening of her wedding, many hundred years ago, and was never seen again. Thou canst read that thyself upon the monument in the garden, upon which are sculptured both swans and storks, and above it stands one like thyself in the white marble."

And so it was. Helga saw, comprehended it all, and sank on her knees.

The sun burst forth in all its morning splendor, and as, in former days, with its first rays fell the frog disguise, and the lovely form became visible; so now, in the baptism of light, arose a form of celestial beauty, purer than the air, as if in a veil of radiance to the Father

above. The body sank into dust, and where she had stood lay a faded lotus-flower!

"Well, this is a new finale to the story," said the stork-father, "which I by no means expected; but I am quite satisfied with it."

"I wonder what the young ones will say to it?" replied the stork-mother.

"Ah! that, indeed, is of the most consequence," said the stork-father.



THE LAST PEARL.



WE are in a rich, a happy house; all are cheerful and full of joy, master, servants, and friends of the family; for on this day an heir, a son, had been born, and mother and child were doing exceedingly well.

The burning lamp in the bedchamber had been partly shaded, and the windows were guarded by heavy curtains of some costly silken fabric. The carpet was thick, and soft as a mossy lawn, and every thing invited to slumber—was charmingly suggestive of repose—and the nurse found that, for she slept; and here she might sleep, for every thing was good and blessed. The guardian spirit of the house leaned against the head of the bed; over the child at the mother's breast there spread as it were a net of shining stars in endless number, and each star was a pearl of happiness. All the good stars of life had brought their gifts to the

new-born one; here sparkled health, wealth, fortune, and love—in short, every thing that man can wish for on earth.

“Every thing has been presented here!” said the guardian spirit.

“No, not every thing,” said a voice near him, the voice of the child’s *good angel*.

“One fairy has not yet brought her gift; but she will do so some day, even if years should elapse first, she will bring her gift; the *last pearl* is yet wanting.”

“Wanting! here nothing may be wanting, and if it should be the case, let me go and seek the powerful fairy; let us betake ourselves to her!”

“She comes! she will come some day unsought! Her pearl may not be wanting; it must be there, so that the complete crown may be won.”

“Where is she to be found? Where does she dwell? Tell it me, and I will procure the pearl.”

“You will do that?” said the good angel of the child. “I will lead you to her directly, wherever she may be. She has no abiding place—sometimes she rules in the emperor’s palace, sometimes you will find her in the peas-

ant's humble cot; she goes by no person without leaving a trace; she brings two gifts to all; be it a world or a trifle! To this child also she must come. You think the time is equally long, but not equally profitable. Come, let us go for this pearl, the last pearl in all this wealth."

And hand in hand they floated towards the spot where the fairy was now lingering.

It was a great house with dark windows, and empty rooms, and a peculiar stillness reigned therein; a whole row of windows had been opened, so that the rough air could penetrate at its pleasure; the long, white, hanging curtains moved to and fro in the current of wind.

In the middle of the room was placed an open coffin, and in this coffin lay the corpse of a woman, still in the bloom of youth, and very beautiful. Fresh roses were scattered over her, so that only the delicate folded hands, and the noble face, glorified in death by the solemn look of consecration and entrance to the better world, were visible.

Around the coffin stood the husband and the children, a whole troop; the youngest child rested on the father's arm, and all bade their mother the last farewell; the husband kissed

her hand, the hand which now was as a withered leaf; but which a short time ago had been working and striving in diligent love for them all. Tears of sorrow rolled over their cheeks, and fell in heavy drops to the floor; but not a word was spoken. The silence which reigned here expressed a world of grief. With silent footsteps and with many a sob, they quitted the room.

A burning light stands in the room, and the long red wick peers out high above the flame that flickers in the current of air. Strange men come in, and lay the lid on the coffin over the dead one, and drive the nails firmly in, and the blows of the hammer resound through the house, and echo in the hearts that are bleeding.

“Whither art thou leading me?” asked the guardian spirit. “Here dwells no fairy whose pearl might be counted amongst the best gifts for life!”

“Here she lingers; here in this sacred hour,” said the angel, and pointed to a corner of the room; and there where in her lifetime the mother had taken her seat amid flowers and pictures; there from whence, like the beneficent fairy of the house, she had greeted husband, children, and friends; from whence, like

the sunbeams, she had spread joy and cheerfulness, and been the centre and the heart of all there sat a strange woman, clad in long garments, it was "the Chastened Heart," now mistress and mother here in the dead lady's place. A hot tear rolled down into her lap, and formed itself into a pearl glowing with all the colors of the rainbow; the angel seized it, and the pearl shone like a star of sevenfold radiance.

The pearl of Chastening, the last, which must not be wanting! it heightens the lustre and the meaning of the other pearls. Do you see the sheen of the rainbow—of the bow that unites heaven and earth! A bridge has been built between this world and the heaven beyond. Through the earthly night we gaze upward to the stars, looking for perfection. Contemplate it, the pearl of Chastening, for it hides within itself the wings that shall carry us to the better world

THE METAL PIG.

N the city of Florence, not far from the *Piazza del Granduca*, there runs a little cross-street. I think it is called *Porta Rosa*. In this street, in front of a kind of market-hall where vegetables are sold, there lies a pig artistically fashioned of metal. The fresh clear water pours from the jaws of the creature, which has become a blackish-green from age ; only the snout shines as if it had been polished ; and indeed it has been, by many hundreds of children and lazzaroni, who seize it with their hands, and place their mouths close to the mouth of the animal, to drink. It is a perfect picture to see the well-shaped creature clasped by a half-naked boy, who lays his red lips against its jaws.

Every one who comes to Florence can easily find the place ; he need only ask the first beggar he meets for the metal pig, and he will find it.

It was late on a winter evening. The moun-

tains were covered with snow; but the moon shone, and moonlight in Italy is just as good as the light of a murky northern winter's day; nay, it is better, for the air shines and lifts us up, while in the north the cold gray leaden covering seems to press us downwards to the earth,—the cold damp earth, which will once press down our coffin.

In the garden of the grand duke's palace, under a penthouse roof, where a thousand roses bloom in winter, a little ragged boy had been sitting all day long, a boy who might serve as a type of Italy, pretty and smiling, and yet suffering. He was hungry and thirsty, but no one gave him any thing; and when it became dark, and the garden was to be closed, the porter turned him out. Long he stood musing on the bridge that spans the Arno, and looked at the stars, whose light glittered in the water between him and the splendid marble bridge *Della Trinità*.

He took the way towards the metal pig, half knelt down, clasped his arms round it, put his mouth against its shining snout, and drank the fresh water in deep draughts. Close by lay a few leaves of salad and one or two chestnuts; these were his supper. No one was in the

street but himself; it belonged to him alone, and he boldly sat down on the pig's back, bent forward, so that his curly head rested on the head of the animal, and before he was aware he fell asleep.

It was midnight. The Metal Pig stirred and he heard it say quite distinctly, "You little boy, hold tight, for now I am going to run," and away it ran with him. This was a wonderful ride. First they got to the *Piazza dei Granduca*, and the metal horse which carries the duke's statue neighed aloud; the painted coats-of-arms on the old council-horse looked like transparent pictures; and Michael Angelo's "David" swung his sling: there was a strange life stirring among them. The metal groups representing persons, and the rape of the Sabines, stood there as if they were alive: a cry of mortal fear escaped them, and resounded over the splendid square.

By the *Palazzo degli Uffizi*, in the arcade where the nobility assemble for the Carnival amusements, the metal pig stopped. "Hold tight," said the creature, "for now we are going up-stairs." The little boy spoke not a word, for he was half frightened, half delighted. They came into a long gallery where the boy

had already been. The walls shone with pictures; here stood statues and busts, all in the most charming light, as if it had been broad day: but the most beautiful of all was when the door of a side-room opened; the little boy could remember the splendor that was there, but on this night every thing shone in the most glorious colors.

Here stood a beautiful woman, as radiant in beauty as nature and the greatest master of sculpture could make her; she moved her graceful limbs, dolphins sprang at her feet, and immortality shone out of her eyes. The world calls her the Venus de Medici. By her side are statues in which the spirit of life has been breathed into the stone; they are handsome unclothed men—one was sharpening a sword, and was called the grinder; the wrestling gladiators formed another group; and the sword was sharpened, and they strove for the goddess of beauty.

The boy was dazzled by all this pomp; the walls gleamed with bright colors, every thing was life and movement.

What splendor, what beauty shone from hall to hall! and the little boy saw every thing plainly, for the metal pig went step by step

from one picture to another, through all this scene of magnificence. Each fresh glory effaced the last. One picture only fixed itself firmly in his soul, especially through the very happy children introduced into it; for these the little boy had greeted in the daylight.

Many persons pass by this picture with indifference; and yet it contains a treasure of poetry. It represents the Saviour descending into hell. But these are not the damned whom the spectator sees around him, they are heathen. The Florentine Angiolo Bronzino painted this picture. Most beautiful is the expression on the faces of the children, the full confidence that they will get to heaven; two little beings are already embracing; and one little one stretches out his hand towards another who stands below him, and points to himself as if he were saying, "I am going to heaven!" The older people stand uncertain, hoping, but bowing in humble adoration before the Lord Jesus. The boy's eyes rested longer on this picture than on any other. The metal pig stood still before it. A low sigh was heard; did it come from the picture or from the animal? The boy lifted up his hands towards the smiling children; then the pig ran away with him, away

through the open vestibule. "Thanks and blessings to you, you dear thing!" said the little boy, and caressed the metal pig, as it sprang down the steps with him."

"Thanks and blessings to yourself," replied the metal pig. "I have helped you, and you have helped me, for only with an innocent child on my back do I receive power to run! Yes, you see I may even step into the rays of the lamp, in front of the picture of the Madonna, only I mayn't go into the church. But from without, when you are with me, I may look in through the open door. Do not get down from my back; if you do so, I shall lie dead as you see me in the daytime at the *Porta Rosa*."

"I will stay with you, my dear creature!" cried the child; so they went in hot haste through the streets of Florence, out into the place before the church *Santa Croce*."

The folding-doors flew open and lights gleamed out from the altar through the church on the deserted square.

A wonderful blaze of light streamed forth from a monument in the left aisle, and a thousand moving stars seemed to form a glory round it. A coat of arms shone upon the grave, a red ladder in a blue field seemed to glow like fire;

it was the grave of Galilei. The monument is unadorned, but the red ladder is a significant emblem, as if it were that of art, for here the way always leads up a burning ladder, towards heaven. The prophets of mind soar upward towards heaven, like Elias of old.

To the right, in the aisle of the church, every statue on the richly carved sarcophagi seemed endowed with life. Here stood Michael Angelo, there Dante with the laurel wreath round his brow, Alfieri and Machiavelli; for here the great men, the pride of Italy, rest side by side.* It is a glorious church, far more beautiful than the marble cathedral of Florence, though not so large.

It seemed as if the marble vestments stirred, as if the great forms raised their heads higher and looked up, amid song and music, to the

* Opposite to the grave of Galilei is the tomb of Michael Angelo. On the monument his bust is displayed, with three figures, representing Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture. Close by is a monument to Dante, whose corpse is interred at Ravenna; on this monument Italy is represented pointing to a colossal statue of the poet, while Poetry weeps over his loss. A few paces further on is Alfieri's monument, adorned with laurel, the lyre, and dramatic masks: Italy weeps at his grave. Machiavelli here closes the series of celebrated men.

bright altar glowing with color, where the white-clad boys swing the golden censers; and the strong fragrance streamed out of the church into the open square.

The boy stretched forth his hand towards the gleaming light; and in a moment the metal pig resumed his headlong career; he was obliged to cling tightly, and the wind whistled about his ears: he heard the church-door creak on its hinges as it closed; but at the same moment his senses seemed to desert him—he felt a cold shudder pass over him, and awoke.

It was morning; and he was still sitting on the metal pig, which stood, where it always stood on the *Porta Rosa*, and he had slipped half off its back.

Fear and trembling filled the soul of the boy at the thought of her whom he called mother, and who had yesterday sent him forth to bring money; for he had none, and was hungry and thirsty. Once more he clasped his arms round the neck of his metal horse, kissed its lips, and nodded farewell to it. Then he wandered away into one of the narrowest streets where there was scarcely room for a laden ass. A great iron-clamped door stood ajar; he passed through it, and climbed up a brick stair with dirty walls

and a rope for a balustrade, till he came to an open gallery hung with rags: from here a flight of stairs led down into the court, where there was a fountain, and great iron wires led up to the different stories, and many water-buckets hung side by side, and at times the roller creaked, and one of the buckets would dance into the air, swaying so that the water splashed out of it down into the courtyard. A second ruinous brick staircase here led upwards: two Russian sailors were running briskly down, and almost overturned the poor boy. They were going home from their nightly carouse. A large woman, no longer young, followed them. "What do you bring home?" she asked the boy

"Don't be angry," he pleaded. "I received nothing, nothing at all," and he seized the mother's dress, and would have kissed it. They went into the little room. I will not describe it, but only say that there stood in it an earthen pot with handles, made for holding fire, and called a *marito*. This pot she took in her arms, warmed her fingers, and pushed the boy with her elbow. "Certainly you must have brought some money," said she.

The boy wept, and she struck him with her foot, so that he cried aloud.

“Will you be silent, or I’ll break your screaming head!” and she brandished the fire-pot which she held in her hand; the boy crouched down to the earth with a scream of terror. Then a neighbor stepped in, also with a *marito* in her arms. “Felicita,” she said, “what are you doing to the child?”

“The child is mine,” retorted Felicita. “I can murder him if I like, and you, too, Giannina,” and she swung her fire-pot. The other lifted up hers in self-defence, and the two pots clashed together with such fury that fragments, fire, and ashes flew about the room: but at the same moment the boy rushed out at the door, sped across the courtyard, and fled from the house. The poor child ran till he was quite out of breath: he stopped by the church whose great doors had opened to him the previous night, and went in. Every thing was radiant: the boy knelt down at the first grave on the right hand, the grave of Michael Angelo; and soon he sobbed aloud. People came and went and Mass was performed; but no one noticed the boy, only an elderly citizen stood still looked at him, and then went away like the rest.

Hunger and thirst tormented the child; he

was quite faint and ill, and he crept into a corner between the marble monuments, and went to sleep. Towards evening he was awakened by a tug at his sleeve: he started up, and the same citizen stood before him.

"Are you ill? Where do you live? Have you been here all day?" were three of the many questions the old man asked of him. He answered, and the old man took him into his little house, close by, in a back street. They came into a glover's workshop, where a woman sat sewing busily. A little white Spitz-dog, so closely shaven that his pink skin could be seen, frisked about on the table, and gambolled before the boy.

"Innocent souls make acquaintance," said the woman; and she caressed the boy and the dog. The good people gave the child food and drink, and said he should be permitted to stay the night with them; and next day Father Giuseppe would speak to his mother. A little simple bed was assigned to him; but for him who had often slept on the hard stones it was a royal couch; and he slept sweetly, and dreamed of the splendid pictures and of the metal pig.

Father Giuseppe went out next morning; the poor child was not glad of this, for he knew

that the object of the errand was to send him back to his mother. He wept, and kissed the little merry dog, and the woman nodded approvingly at both.

What news did Father Giuseppe bring home. He spoke a great deal with his wife, and she nodded and stroked the boy's cheek. "He is a capital lad!" said she. "He may become an accomplished glove maker, like you; and look what delicate fingers he has! Madonna intended him for a glove-maker!"

And the boy stayed in the house, and the woman herself taught him to sew: he ate well, slept well, and became merry, and began to tease Bellissima, as the little dog was called; but the woman grew angry at this, and scolded and threatened him with her finger. This touched the boy's heart, and he sat thoughtful in his little chamber. This chamber looked upon the street in which skins were dried; there were thick bars of iron before his window; he could not sleep, the metal pig was always present in his thoughts, and suddenly he heard outside a pit-pat. That must be the pig! He sprang to the window; but nothing was to be seen, it had passed by already.

"Help the gentleman to carry his box of col

ors!" said the woman next morning, to the boy, when their young neighbor the artist passed by carrying a paint-box and a large rolled canvas. The boy took the box and followed the painter; they betook themselves to the gallery, and mounted the same staircase, which he remembered well from the night when he had ridden on the metal pig. He recognized the statues and pictures, the beautiful marble Venus, and the Venus that lived in the picture; and again he saw the Madonna, and the Saviour, and St. John

They stood still before the picture by Bronzino, in which Christ is descending into hell, and the children smiled around him, in the sweet expectation of heaven; the poor child smiled too, for he felt as if his heaven were here.

"Go home now!" said the painter, when the boy had stood until the other had set up his easel.

"May I see you paint?" asked the boy. "May I see you put the picture upon this white canvas?"

"I am not going to paint yet," replied the man; and he brought out a piece of white chalk. His hand moved quickly; his eye measured the great picture, and though nothing ap-

peared but a thin line, the figure of the Saviour stood there, as in the colored picture.

“Why don’t you go?” said the painter. And the boy wandered home silently, and seated himself on the table and learned to sew gloves.

But all day long his thoughts were in the picture gallery; and so it came that he pricked his fingers, and was awkward; but he did not tease Bellissima. When evening came, and when the house-door stood open, he crept out. It was cold but starlight, a bright beautiful evening. Away he went through the already deserted streets, and soon came to the metal pig; he bent down on it, kissed its shining mouth, and seated himself on its back. “You happy creature,” he said: “how I have longed for you! we must take a ride to-night.”

The metal pig lay motionless, and the fresh stream gushed forth from its mouth. The little boy sat astride on its back: then something tugged at his clothes. He looked down, and there was Bellissima,—little smooth-shaven Bellissima,—barking as if she would have said “Here am I too, why are you sitting there?” A fiery dragon could not have terrified the boy so much, as did the little dog in this place

Bellissima in the street and not *dressed*, as the old lady called it! What would be the end of it? The dog never came out in winter, except attired in a little lambskin, which had been cut out and made into a coat for her; it was made to fasten with a red riband round the little dog's neck and body, and was adorned with bows and with bells. The dog almost looked like a little kid, when in winter she got permission to patter out with mistress. Bellissima was outside and not dressed! what would be the end of it? All his fancies were put to flight; yet the boy kissed the metal pig once more, and then took Bellissima on his arm; the little thing trembled with cold, therefore the boy ran as fast as he could.

"What are you running away with there?" asked two police-soldiers whom he met, and at whom Bellissima barked. "Where have you stolen that pretty dog?" they asked, and they took it away from him.

"Oh, give it back to me!" cried the boy despairingly.

"If you have not stolen him, you may say at home that the dog may be sent for from the watch-house,"—and they told him where the watch-house was, and went away with Bellissima.

Here was a terrible calamity. The boy did not know whether he should jump into the Arno, or go home and confess every thing: they would certainly kill him, he thought. 'But I will gladly be killed; then I shall die and get to heaven," he reasoned; and he went home, principally with the idea of being killed.

The door was locked, he could not reach the knocker; no one was in the street, but a stone lay there, and with this he thundered at the door.

"Who is there?" cried somebody from within.

"It is I," said he. "Bellissima is gone. Open the door, and then kill me!"

There was quite a panic; Madame was especially concerned for poor Bellissima. She immediately looked at the wall, where the dog's dress usually hung—and there was the little lambskin.

"Bellissima in the watch-house!" she cried loud. "You bad boy! How did you entice her out? She'll be frozen, the poor delicate little thing, among those rough soldiers!"

The father was at once dispatched—the woman lamented, and the boy wept. All the inhabitants of the house came together, and

among the rest, the painter; he took the boy between his knees and questioned him; and in broken sentences he heard the whole story about the metal pig and the gallery, which was certainly rather incomprehensible. The painter consoled the little fellow, and tried to calm the old lady's anger; but she would not be pacified until the father came in with Bellissima, who had been among the soldiers; then there was great rejoicing; and the painter caressed the boy, and gave him a handful of pictures.

Oh, those were capital pieces—such funny heads!—and truly the metal pig was there among them, bodily. Oh, nothing could be more superb! By means of a few strokes it was made to stand there on the paper, and even the house that stood behind it was sketched in.

Oh! for the ability to draw and paint! He who could do this, could conjure up the whole world around him!

On the first leisure moment of the following day, the little fellow seized the pencil, and on the back of one of the pictures he attempted to copy the drawing of the metal pig;—and he succeeded! It was certainly rather crooked, rather up and down, one leg thick and another

thin, but still it was to be recognized, and he rejoiced himself at it. The pencil would not quite work as it should do, that he could well observe: on the next day a second metal pig was drawn by the side of the first, and this looked a hundred times better; the third was already so good, that every one could tell what it was meant for.

But the glove-making prospered little, and the orders given in the town were executed but slowly; for the metal pig had taught him that all pictures may be drawn on paper; and Florence is a picture-book for any one who chooses to turn over its pages. On the *Piazza del Trinitá* stands a slender pillar, and upon it the goddess of Justice blindfolded, and with her scales in her hand. Soon she was placed on the paper; and it was the glove-maker's little boy who placed her there. The collection of pictures increased, but as yet it only contained representations of lifeless objects; when one day Bellissima came gambolling before him. "Stand still!" said he, "then you shall be made beautiful and put into my collection!" But Bellissima would not stand still, she had to be bound fast; her head and tail were tied, and she barked and jumped, and the string had

to be pulled tight; and then the signora came in.

“You wicked boy! The poor creature!” was all she could utter; and she pushed the boy aside, thrust him away with her foot, forbade him to enter her house again, and called him a most ungrateful good-for-nothing and a wicked boy; and then weeping, she kissed her little half-strangled Bellissima.

At this very moment the painter came downstairs, and here is the turning point of the story.

In the year 1834 there was an exhibition in the Academy of Arts at Florence. Two pictures, placed side by side, collected a number of spectators. The smaller of the two represented a merry little boy who sat drawing, with a little white Spitz-dog, curiously shorn, for his model; but the animal would not stand still, and was therefore bound by a string, fastened to its head and its tail; there was a truth and life in this picture, that interested every one. The painter was said to be a young Florentine, who had been found in the streets in his childhood, had been brought up by an old glove-maker, and had taught himself to draw. It was further said that a painter, now become

famous, had discovered this talent just as the boy was to be sent away for tying up the favorite little dog of Madame, and using it as a model.

The glove-maker's boy had become a great painter, the picture proved this, and still more the larger picture that stood beside it. Here was represented only one figure, a handsome boy, clad in rags, asleep in the streets, and leaning against the metal pig in the *Porta Rosa* street. All the spectators knew the spot. The child's arms rested upon the head of the pig; the little fellow was so fast asleep—the lamp before the picture of the Madonna threw a strong effective light on the pale delicate face of the child—it was a beautiful picture! A great gilt frame surrounded it, and on one corner of the frame a laurel wreath had been hung; but a black band wound unseen among the green leaves, and a streamer of crape hung down from it; for within the last few days the young artist had—died!

THE MONEY PIG.

IN the nursery a number of toys lay strewn about. High up, on the wardrobe, stood the money-box, made of clay and purchased of the potter, and it was in the shape of a little pig: of course the pig had a slit in its back; and this slit had been so enlarged with a knife, that whole dollar pieces could slip through; and, indeed, two such had slipped into the box, besides a number of pence. The money-pig was stuffed so full that it could no longer rattle, and that is the highest point of perfection a money-pig can attain. There it stood upon the cupboard, high and lofty, looking down upon every thing else in the room: it knew very well that what it had in its stomach would have bought all the toys, and that's what we call having self-respect.

The others thought of that too, even if they did not exactly express it, for there were many

other things to speak of. One of the drawers was half pulled out, and there lay a great handsome doll, though she was somewhat old, and her neck had been mended. She looked out and said, "Now we'll play at men and women, for that is always something!" And now there was a general uproar, and even the framed prints on the walls turned round and showed that there was a wrong side to them; but they did not do it to protest against the proposal.

It was late at night; the moon shone through the window frames and afforded the cheapest light. The game was now to begin, and all, even the children's go-cart, which certainly belonged to the coarser playthings, were invited to take part in the sport.

"Each one has his own peculiar value!" said the go-cart: "we cannot all be noblemen! There must be some who do the work, as the saying is." The money-pig was the only one who received a written invitation, for he was of high standing, and they were afraid he would not accept the verbal message. Indeed, he did not answer to say whether he would come. Nor did he come; if he was to take a part, he must enjoy the sport from his own home: they were to arrange accordingly, and so they did.

The little toy-theatre was now put up in such a way that the money-pig could look directly in. They wanted to begin with a comedy; and afterwards there was to be a tea-party, and a discussion for mental improvement, and with this latter part they began immediately. The rocking-horse spoke of training and race; the go-cart of railways and steam-power, for all this belonged to their profession, and it was quite right they should talk of it. The clock talked politics—ticks—ticks, and knew what was the time of day, though it was whispered he did not go correctly: the bamboo cane stood there, stiff and proud, for he was conceited about his brass ferule and his silver top, for being thus bound above and below: on the sofa lay two worked cushions, pretty and stupid. And now the play began.

All sat and looked on, and it was requested the audience should applaud, and crack and stamp according as they were gratified. But the riding-whip said he never cracked for old people, only for young ones who were not yet married. "I crack for every thing," said the cracker; and these were the thoughts they had while the play went on. The piece was worthless, but it was well played; all the characters

turned their painted side to the audience, for they were so made that they should only be looked at from that side, and not from the other; and all played wonderfully well, coming out quite beyond the lamps, because the wires were a little too long, but that only made them come out the more. The darned doll was quite exhausted with excitement—so thoroughly exhausted that she burst at the darned place in her neck; and the money-pig was so enchanted in his way, that he formed the resolution to do something for one of the players, and to remember him in his will as the one who should be buried with him in the family vault, when matters were so far advanced.

It was true enjoyment; such true enjoyment that they quite gave up the thoughts of tea, and only carried out the idea of mental recreation. That's what they called playing at men and women, and there was nothing wrong in it, for they were only playing; and each one thought of himself and what the money-pig might think; and the money-pig thought furthest of all, for he thought of making his will and of his burial. And when might this come to pass? Certainly far sooner than was expected. Crack! it fell down from the cupboard,—fell on

the ground, and was broken to pieces; and the pennies hopped and danced in comical style: the little ones turned round like tops, and the bigger ones rolled away, particularly the one great silver dollar, who wanted to go out into the world. And he came out into the world, and they all succeeded in doing so; and the pieces of the money-pig were put into the dust-bin: but the next day a new money-pig was standing on the cupboard; it had not yet a farthing in its stomach, and therefore could not rattle, and in this it was like the other—and that was a beginning—and with that we will make an end.



THE WICKED PRINCE.

 HERE was once a wicked Prince
His aim and object was to conquer
all the countries in the world, and to
inspire all men with fear; he went
about with fire and sword, and his
soldiers trampled down the corn in
the fields, and set fire to the peasant's
house, so that the red flames licked the leaves
from the trees, and the fruit hung burnt on the
black charred branches. With her naked baby
in her arms, many a poor mother took refuge
behind the still smoking walls of her burnt
house; but here even the soldiers sought for
their victims, and if they found them it was
new food for their demoniac fury: evil spirits
could not have raged worse than did these sol-
diers; but the Prince thought their deeds were
right, and that it must be so. Every day his
power increased; his name was feared by all,

and fortune accompanied him in all his actions. From conquered countries he brought vast treasures home; in his capital an amount of wealth was heaped, unequalled in any other place. And he caused gorgeous palaces, churches, and halls to be built, and every one who saw those great buildings and these vast treasures cried out respectfully, "What a great Prince!" They thought not of the misery he had brought upon other lands and cities; they heard not all the sighs and all the mournings that arose from among the ruins of demolished towns.

The Prince looked upon his gold, and upon his mighty buildings, and his thoughts were like those of the crowd, "What a great Prince am I! But," so his thought ran on, "I must have more, far more! No power may be equal to mine, much less exceed it!" And he made war upon all his neighbors, and overcame them all. The conquered kings he caused to be bound with fetters of gold to his chariot, and thus he drove through the streets of his capital: when he banqueted, those kings were compelled to kneel at his feet, and at the feet of his courtiers, and to receive the broken pieces which were thrown to them from the table.

At last the Prince caused his own statue to

be set up in the open squares and in the royal palaces, and he even wished to place it in the churches before the altars; but here the priests stood up against him, and said, "Prince, thou art mighty, but heaven is mightier, and we dare not fulfil thy commands."

"Good, then," said the Prince, "I will vanquish heaven likewise." And in his pride and impious haughtiness he caused a costly ship to be built, in which he could sail through the air: it was gay and glaring to behold, like the tail of a peacock, and studded and covered with thousands of eyes; but each eye was the muzzle of a gun. The Prince sat in the midst of the ship, and needed only to press on a spring, and a thousand bullets flew out on all sides, while the gun-barrels were reloaded immediately. Hundreds of eagles were harnessed in front of the ship, and with the speed of an arrow they flew upwards towards the sun. How deep the earth lay below them! With its mountains and forests it seemed but a field through which the plough had drawn its furrows, and along which the green bank rose covered with turf; soon it appeared only like a flat map with indistinct lines, and at last it lay completely hidden in mist and cloud. Ever

higher flew the eagles up into the air: then one of the innumerable angels appeared. The wicked Prince hurled thousands of bullets against him; but the bullets sprang back from the angel's shining pinions, and fell down like common hailstones; but a drop of blood, one single drop, fell from one of the white wing-feathers, and this drop fell upon the ship in which the Prince sat, and burnt its way deep into the ship, and weighing like a thousand hundred-weight of lead, dragged down the ship in headlong fall towards the earth; the strongest pinions of the eagles broke, the wind roared round the Prince's head, and the clouds aroused—formed from the smoke of burned cities—drew themselves together in threatening shapes like huge sea-crabs, stretching forth their claws and nippers towards him, and piled themselves up in great overshadowing rocks, with crushing fragments rolling down them; and then to fiery dragons, till the Prince lay half dead in the ship, which at last was caught with a terrible shock in the thick branches of a forest.

“I will conquer heaven,” said the Prince
“I have sworn it, and my will *must* be done!”
and for seven years he caused his men to work
at making ships for sailin through the air, and

had thunderbolts made of the hardest steel, for he wished to storm the fortress of heaven : out of all his dominions he gathered armies together, so that when they were drawn up in rank and file they covered a space of several miles. The armies went on board the ships, and the Prince approached his own vessel ; then there was sent out against him a swarm of gnats, a single little swarm of gnats. The swarm buzzed round the Prince, and stung his face and hands ; raging with anger he drew his sword, and struck all around him ; but he only struck the empty air, for he could not hit the gnats. Then he commanded his people to bring costly hangings, and to wrap them around him, so that no gnat might further sting him ; and the servants did as he commanded them. But a single gnat had attached itself to the inner side of the hangings, and crept into the ear of the Prince, and stung him ; it burned like fire, and the poison penetrated to his brain : like a madman he tore the hangings from his body and hurled them far away, tore his clothes and danced about naked before the eyes of his rude, savage soldiers, who now jeered at the mad Prince, who wanted to overcome heaven, and who himself was conquered by one single little gnat.

CHILDREN'S PRATTLE.



At the rich merchant's there was a children's party; rich people's children and grand people's children were there. The merchant was a learned man; he had once gone through the college examination, for his honest father had kept him to this, his father who had at first only been a cattle-dealer, but always an honest and industrious man; the trade had brought money, and the merchant had managed to increase the store. Clever he was, and he had also a heart, but there was less said of his heart than of his money. At the merchant's, grand people went in and out; people of blood, as it is called, and people of intellect, and people who had both of these, and people who had neither. Now there was a children's party there, and children's prattle; and children speak frankly from the heart.

Among the rest there was a beautiful little girl, but the little one was terribly proud; but the servants had taught her that, not her parents, who were far too sensible people. Her father was a groom of the bedchamber, and that is a very grand office, and she knew it.

"I am a child of the bedchamber," she said. Now she might just as well have been a child of the cellar, for nobody can help his birth; and then she told the other children that she was "well-born," and said "that no one who was not well-born could get on far in the world; it was of no use to read and to be industrious, if one was not well-born one could not achieve any thing."

"And those whose names end with 'sen,'" said she, "they cannot be any thing at all! One must put one's arms akimbo and make the elbows quite pointed, and keep them at a great distance, these 'sen! sen!'" And she struck out her pretty little arms, and made the elbows quite pointed, to show how it was to be done, and her little arms were very pretty. She was a sweet little girl.

But the little daughter of the merchant became very angry at this speech, for her father's name was Petersen, and she knew that the name

ended in "sen," and therefore she said, as proudly as ever she could—

"But my papa can buy a hundred dollars' worth of bon-bons and strew them to the children! Can your papa do that?"

"Yes, but my papa," said an author's little daughter, "my papa can put your papa and everybody's papa into the newspaper. All people are afraid of him, my mamma says, for it is my father who rules in the newspaper."

And the little maiden looked exceedingly proud, as though she had been a real princess, who is expected to look proud.

But outside, at the door which was ajar, stood a poor boy, peeping through the crack of the door. He was of such lowly station that he was not even allowed to enter the room. He had turned the spit for the cook, and she had allowed him to stand behind the door, and to look at the well-dressed children who were making a merry day within, and for him that was a great deal.

"Oh, to be one of them!" thought he; and then he heard what was said, which was certainly calculated to make him very unhappy. "His parents at home had not a penny to spare to buy a newspaper, much less could they

write one; and what was worst of all, his father's name, and consequently his own, ended completely in 'sen,' and so he could not turn out well. That was terrible. But after all, he had been born, and very well born as it seemed to him; that could not be otherwise."

And that is what was done on that evening.

Many years have elapsed since then, and in the course of years children become grown-up persons.

In the town stood a splendid house; it was filled with all kinds of beautiful objects and treasures, and all people wished to see it, even people who dwelt out of town came in to see it. Which of the children of whom we have told might call this house his own? To know that is very easy. No, no; it is not so very easy. The house belonged to the poor little boy who had stood on that night behind the door, and he had become something great, although his name ended in "sen,"—Thorwald sen.

And the three other children—the children of *blood* and of money, and of spiritual pride!

Well, they had nothing wherewith to reproach each other—they turned out well enough, for they had been well dowered by nature—and what they had thought and spoken on that evening long ago was mere *children's prattle*



TWO BROTHERS.



IN one of the Danish islands where old Thingstones, the seats of justice of our forefathers, are found in the fields, and great trees tower in the beechwoods, there lies a little town, whose low houses are covered with red tiles. In one of these houses wondrous things were brewed over glowing coals on the open hearth: there was a boiling in glasses, a mixing and a distilling, and herbs were cut up, and bruised in mortars, and an elderly man attended to all this.

“One must only do the right thing,” said he, ‘yes, the right thing; one must learn the truth about every created particle, and keep lose to this truth.”

In the room with the good housewife sat her two sons, still small; but with grown-up thoughts. The mother had always spoken to

them of right and justice, and had exacted them to hold truth fast, declaring that it was as the countenance of the Almighty in this world.

The elder of the boys looked roguish, and enterprising: it was his delight to read of the forces of nature, of the sun and of the stars; no fairy tale pleased him so much as these. Oh! how glorious it must be, he thought, to go out on voyages of discovery, or to find out how the wings of birds could be imitated, and then to fly through the air! Yes, to find that out would be the right thing; father was right, and mother was right, truth keeps the world together.

The younger brother was quieter, and quite lost himself in books. When he read of Jacob clothing himself in sheepskins to be like Esau, and to cheat his brother of his birthright, his little fist would clench in anger against the deceiver; when he read of tyrants, and of all the wickedness and wrong that is in the world, the tears stood in his eyes, and he was quite filled with the thought of the right and truth which must and will at last be triumphant. One evening he already lay in bed; but the curtains were not yet drawn close, and the light

streamed in upon him : he had taken the book with him to bed, because he wanted to finish the story of Solon.

And his thoughts lifted and carried him away marvellously, and it seemed to him that his bed became a ship, careering onward with swelling sails. Did he dream? or what was happening to him? It glided onward over the rolling waters and the great ocean of time, and he heard the voice of Solon. In a strange tongue, and yet intelligible to him, he heard the Danish motto, "With law the land is ruled."

And the Genius of the human race stood in the humble room, and bent down over the bed, and printed a kiss on the boy's forehead. "Be thou strong in fame, and strong in the battle of life! With the truth in thy breast, fly thou towards the land of truth!"

The elder brother was not yet in bed; he stood at the window gazing out at the mists that rose from the meadows. They were not elves dancing there, as the old muse had told him; he knew better; they were vapors, warmer than the air, and that consequently mounted. A shooting-star gleamed athwart the sky, and the thoughts of the boy were roused from the

mists of the earth to the shining meteor. The stars of heaven twinkled, and golden threads seemed to hang from them down upon the earth.

“Fly with me,” it sang and sounded in the boy’s heart, and the mighty genius, swifter than the bird, than the arrow, than any thing that flies with earthly means, carried him aloft to the region where rays stretching from star to star bind the heavenly bodies to each other—our earth revolved in the thin air—the cities on its surface seemed quite close together, and through the sphere it sounded: “What is near, what is far, when the mighty genius of mind lifts them up?”

And again the boy stood at the window and gazed forth, and the younger brother lay in his bed, and their mother called them by their names, “Anders Sandoe” and “Hans Christian!”

Denmark knows them—the world knows them—the two brothers Oersted.

BY THE

ALMSHOUSE WINDOW.



NEAR the grass-covered rampart which encircles Copenhagen lies a great red house; balsams and other flowers greet us from the long rows of windows in the house, whose interior is sufficiently poverty-stricken; and poor and old are the people who inhabit it.

The building is the Warton Almshouse.

Look! at the window there leans an old maid; she plucks the withered leaf from the balsam and looks at the grass-covered rampart, on which many children are playing. What is the old maid thinking of? A whole life-drama is unfolding itself before her inward gaze.

The poor little children, how happy they are, how merrily they play and romp together! What red cheeks and what angels' eyes! but they have no shoes nor stockings. They danced on the green rampart, just on the place where,

according to the old story, the ground always sank in, and where a sportive frolicsome child had been lured by means of flowers, toys, and sweetmeats into an open grave ready dug for it, and which was afterwards closed over the child ;—and from that moment, the old story says, the ground gave way no longer, the mound remained firm and fast, and was quickly covered with fine green turf. The little people who now play on that spot know nothing of the old tale, else would they fancy they heard the child crying deep below the earth, and the dew-drops on each blade of grass would be to them tears of woe. Nor do they know any thing of the Danish king, who here, in the face of the cunning foe, took an oath before all his trembling courtiers, that he would hold out with the citizens of his capital, and die here in his nest ;—they knew nothing of the men who had fought here, or of the women who from here had drenched with boiling water the enemy, clad in white, and abiding in the snow to surprise the city.

No! the poor little ones are playing with light childish spirits. Play on, play on, thou little maiden! Soon the years will come—yes, those glorious years. The priestly hands have

been laid on the candidates for confirmation : hand in hand they walk on the green rampart : thou hast a white frock on, it has cost thy mother much labor, and yet it is only cu down for thee out of an old and larger dress. You will also wear a red shawl ; and what if it hang too far down ? People will only see how large, how very large it is. You are thinking of your dress, and of the Giver of all good ; so glorious is it to wander on the green rampart !

And the years roll by ; they have no lack of dark days, but you have your cheerful young spirit, and you have gained *a friend*, you know not how. You met, oh, how often ! You walk together on the rampart in the fresh spring, on the high days and holidays, when all the world come out to walk on the ramparts, and all the bells of the church steeples seem to be singing a song of praise for the coming spring.

Scarcely have the violets come forth ;—but there on the rampart, just opposite the beautiful castle of Rosenberg, there is a tree bright with the first green buds. Every year this tree sends forth fresh green shoots ;—alas, it is not so with the human heart. Dark mists, more in number than those that cover the northern

skies, cloud the human heart. Poor child—thy friend's bridal chamber is a black coffin, and thou becomest an old maid. From the almshouse window behind the balsams thou shalt look on the merry children at play, and shalt see thy own history renewed.

And that is the life-drama that passes before the old maid, while she looks out upon the rampart, the green sunny rampart, where the children with their red cheeks and bare shoeless feet are rejoicing merrily, like the other free little birds.



GRANDMOTHER.

RANDMOTHER is very old ; she has many wrinkles, and her hair is quite white ; but her eyes, which are like two stars, and even more beautiful, look at you mildly and pleasantly, and it does you good to look into them.

And then she can tell the most wonderful stories ; and she has a gown, with great flowers worked in it, and it is of heavy silk, and it rustles. Grandmother knows a great deal, for she was alive before father and mother, that's quite certain ! Grandmother has a hymn-book, with great silver clasps, and she often reads in that book : in the middle of the book lies a rose, quite flat and dry ; it is not as pretty as the roses she has standing in the glass, and yet she smiles at it most pleasantly of all, and tears even come into her eyes. I wonder why grandmother looks at the withered

flower in the old book in that way? Do you know? Why, each time that grandmother's tears fall upon the rose its colors become fresh again; the rose swells and fills the whole room with its fragrance; the walls sink as if they were but mist, and all around her is the glorious green wood, where in summer the sunlight streams through the leaves of the trees; and grandmother—why she is young again, a charming maiden with light curls and full blooming cheeks, pretty and graceful, fresh as any rose; but the eyes, the mild blessed eyes, they have been left to grandmother. At her side sits a young man, tall and strong; he gives the rose to her, and she smiles; grandmother cannot smile thus now!—yes, now she smiles! But now he has passed away, and many thoughts and many forms of the past, and the handsome young man is gone, and the rose lies in the hymn-book, and grandmother she sits there again, an old woman, and glances down at the withered rose that lies in the book.

Now grandmother is dead. She had been sitting in her arm-chair, and telling a long, long capital tale; and she said the tale was told now, and she was tired, and she leaned her head back to sleep awhile. One could hear



AVERY & CO

her breathing as she slept; but it became quieter and more quiet, and her countenance was full of happiness and peace; it seemed as if a sunshine spread over her features; and she smiled again, and then the people said she was dead.

She was laid in the black coffin; and there she lay shrouded in the white linen folds, looking beautiful and mild, though her eyes were closed; but every wrinkle had vanished, and there was a smile around her mouth; her hair was silver-white and venerable, and we did not feel at all afraid to look at the corpse of her who had been the dear good grandmother. And the hymn-book was placed under her head, for she had wished it so, and the rose was still in the old book; and then they buried grandmother.

On the grave, close by the churchyard wall, they planted a rose-tree, and it was full of roses, and the nightingale flew singing over the flowers and over the grave; in the church the finest psalms sounded from the organ; the psalms that were written in the old book under the dead one's head. The moon shone down upon the grave; but the dead one was not here: every child could go safely, even at night,

and pluck a rose there by the churchyard wall. A dead person knows more than all we living ones. The dead know what a terror would come upon us, if the strange thing were to happen that they appeared among us: the dead are better than we all; the dead return no more. The earth has been heaped over the coffin, and it is earth that lies in the coffin; and the leaves of the hymn-book are dust, and the rose with all its recollections has returned to dust likewise. But above, there bloom fresh roses; the nightingale sings and the organ sounds, and the remembrance lives of the old grandmother, with the mild eyes that always looked young. *Eyes can never die!* Ours will once behold grandmother again, young and beautiful, as when for the first time she kissed the fresh red rose that is now dust in the grave.



FIVE OUT OF ONE SHELL.

 HERE were five peas in one shell: they were green, and the pod was green, and so they thought all the world was green; and that was just as it should be! The shell grew, and the peas grew; they accommodated themselves to circumstances, sitting all in a row. The sun shone without, and warmed the husk, and the rain made it clear and transparent: it was mild and agreeable in the bright day and in the dark night, just as it should be; and the peas as they sat there became bigger and bigger, and more and more thoughtful, for something they must do.

“Are we to sit here everlastingly?” asked one. “I’m afraid we shall become hard by long sitting. It seems to me, there must be something outside; I have a kind of inkling of it.”

And weeks went by; the peas became yel

low, and the pods turned yellow. "All the world's turning yellow," said they; and they had a right to say it.

Suddenly they felt a tug at the shell. The shell was torn off, passed through human hands, and glided down into the pocket of a jacket, in company with other full pods. "Now we shall soon be opened!" they said; and that is just what they were waiting for.

"I should like to know who of us will get furthest!" said the smallest of the five. Yes, now it will soon show itself."

"What is to be, will be," said the biggest. "Crack!" the pod burst, and all the five peas rolled out into the bright sunshine. There they lay in a child's hand; a little boy was clutching them, and said they were fine peas for his pea-shooter; and he put one in directly and shot it out.

"Now I'm flying out into the wide world, catch me if you can!" and he was gone. "I," said the second, "I shall fly straight into the sun. That's a shell worth looking at, and one that exactly suits me," and away he went.

"We'll go to sleep wherever we arrive," said the two next, "but we shall roll on all the same." And they certainly rolled and tum

bled down on the ground before they got into the pea-shooter, but they were put in for all that. "We shall go furthest," said they.

"What is to happen will happen!" said the last, as he was shot forth out of the pea-shooter; and he flew up against the old board under the garret window, just into a crack which was filled up with moss and soft mould; and the moss closed round him: there he lay, a prisoner indeed, but not forgotten by provident nature.

"What is to happen will happen," said he.

Within, in the little garret, lived a poor woman, who went out in the day to clean stoves, chop wood small, and to do other hard work of the same kind, for she was strong and industrious too. But she always remained poor; and at home in the garret lay her half-grown only daughter, who was very delicate and weak; for a whole year she had kept her bed, and it seemed as if she could neither live nor die.

"She is going to her little sister," the woman said. "I had only the two children, and it was not an easy thing to provide for both, but the good God provided for one of them by taking her home to Himself: now I should be glad to keep the other that was left to me; but I sup

pose they are not to remain separated, and my sick girl will go to her sister in heaven."

But the sick girl remained where she was; he lay quiet and patient all day long, while her mother went to earn money out of doors. It was spring, and early in the morning, just as the mother was about to go out to work, the sun shone mildly and pleasantly through the little window, and threw its rays across the floor; and the sick girl fixed her eyes on the lowest pane in the window.

"What may that green thing be that looks in at the window? See, it is moving in the wind."

And the mother stepped to the window and half opened it. "Oh!" said she, "on my word, that is a little pea which has taken root here, and is putting out its little leaves. How can it have got here into the crack? That is a little garden with which you can amuse yourself."

And the sick girl's bed was moved nearer to the window, so that she could see the growing pea; and the mother went forth to her work.

"Mother, I think I shall get well," said the sick child in the evening. "The sun shone in upon me to-day, delightfully warm. The little pea is prospering famously, and I shall prosper

too, and get up, and go out into the warm sunshine."

"God grant it!" said the mother, but she did not believe it would be so; but she took care to prop with a little stick the green plant which had given her daughter the pleasant thoughts of life, so that it might not be broken by the wind: she tied a piece of string to the window-sill, and to the upper part of the frame, so that the pea might have something round which it could twine, when it shot up; and it did shoot up, one could see how it grew every day.

"Really, here is a flower coming!" said the woman one day, and now she began to cherish the hope that her sick daughter would recover; she remembered that lately the child had spoken much more cheerfully than before, that in the last few days she had risen up in bed of her own accord, and had sat upright, looking with delighted eyes at the little garden in which only one plant grew. A week afterwards the invalid for the first time sat up for a whole hour. Quite happy she sat there in the warm sunshine; the window was opened, and outside, before it, stood a pink pea-blossom fully blown. The sick girl bent down, and gently kissed the delicate leaves. This day was like a festival.

"The heavenly Father Himself has planted that pea, and caused it to prosper, to be a joy to you, and to me also, my blessed child!" said the glad mother, and she smiled at the flower, as if it had been a good angel.

But about the other peas? Why, the one who flew out into the wide world, and said, "Catch me if you can," fell into the gutter on the roof, and found a home in a pigeon's crop. The two lazy ones got just as far, for they, too, were eaten up by pigeons, and thus at any rate they were of some real use; but the fourth, who wanted to go up into the sun, fell into the sink, and lay there in the dirty water for weeks and weeks, and swelled prodigiously.

"How beautifully fat I am growing!" said the pea. "I shall burst at last; and I don't think any pea can do more than that. I'm the most remarkable of all the five that were in the shell;" and the sink said he was right.

But the young girl at the garret window stood there with gleaming eyes, with the roseate hue of health on her cheeks, and folded her thin hands over the pea-blossom, and thanked heaven for it.

"I," said the sink, "stand up for my own pea."

THE GIRL WHO TROD UPON BREAD.



YOU have doubtless heard of the girl who trod upon bread, not to soil her pretty shoes, and what evil this brought upon her. The tale is both written and printed.

She was a poor child, but proud and vain. She had a bad disposition, people said. When she was a little more than an infant, it was a pleasure to her to catch flies, to pull off their wings, and maim them entirely. She used, when somewhat older, to take lady-birds and beetles, stick them all upon a pin, then put a large leaf or a piece of paper close to their feet, so that the poor things held fast to it, and turned and twisted in their endeavors to get off the pin.

“Now the lady-birds shall read,” said little Inger. “See how they turn the paper!”

As she grew older she became worse instead of better; but she was very beautiful, and that was her misfortune. She would have been punished otherwise, and in the long run she was.

"You will bring evil on your own head," said her mother. "As a little child you used often to tear my aprons; I fear that when you are older you will break my heart."

And she did so sure enough.

At length she went into the country to wait on people of distinction. They were as kind to her as if she had been one of their own family; and she was so well dressed that she looked very pretty, and became extremely arrogant.

When she had been a year in service, her employers said to her—

"You should go and visit your relations, little Inger."

She went, resolved to let them see how fine she had become. When, however, she reached the village, and saw the lads and lasses gossiping together near the pond, and her mother sitting close by on a stone, resting her head against a bundle of firewood which she had picked up in the forest, Inger turned back. She felt ashamed that she who was dressed so

snartly should have for her mother such a ragged creature, one who gathered sticks for her fire. It gave her no concern that she was expected—she was so vexed.

A half year more had passed.

“You must go home some day and see your old parents, little Inger,” said the mistress of the house. “Here is a large loaf of white bread—you can carry this to them; they will be rejoiced to see you.”

And Inger put on her best clothes and her nice new shoes, and she lifted her dress high, and walked so carefully, that she might not soil her garments or her feet. There was no harm at all in that. But when she came to where the path went over some damp, marshy ground, and there were water and mud in the way, she threw the bread into the mud, in order to step upon it and get over with dry shoes; but just as she had placed one foot on the bread, and had lifted the other up, the bread sank in with her deeper and deeper, till she went entirely down, and nothing was to be seen but a black bubbling pool.

That is the story.

What became of the girl? She went below to the *Old Woman of the Bogs*, who brews

down there. The Old Woman of the Bogs is an aunt of the fairies. *They* are very well known. Many poems have been written about them, and they have been printed; but nobody knows any thing more of the Old Woman of the Bogs than that, when the meadows and the ground begin to reek in summer, it is the old woman below who is brewing. Into her brewery it was that Inger sank, and no one could hold out very long there. A cesspool is a charming apartment compared with the old Bog-woman's brewery. Every vessel is redolent of horrible smells, which would make any human being faint, and they are packed closely together and over each other; but even if there were a small space among them which one might creep through, it would be impossible, on account of all the slimy toads and snakes that are always crawling and forcing themselves through. Into this place little Inger sank. All this nauseous mess was so ice-cold that she shivered in every limb. Yes, she became stiffer and stiffer. The bread stuck fast to her, and it drew her as an amber bead draws a slender thread.

The Old Woman of the Bogs was at home. The brewery was that day visited by the devil

and his dam, and she was a venomous old creature who was never idle. She never went out without having some needlework with her. She had brought some there. She was sewing running leather to put into the shoes of human beings, so that they should never be at rest. She embroidered lies, and worked up into mischief and discord thoughtless words, that would otherwise have fallen to the ground. Yes, she knew how to sew and embroider, and transfer with a vengeance, that old grandam!

She beheld Inger, put on her spectacles, and looked at her.

"That is a girl with talents," said she. "I shall ask for her as a *souvenir* of my visit here; she may do very well as a statue to ornament my great-grandchildren's ante-chamber;" and she took her.

It was thus little Inger went to the infernal regions. People do not generally go straight through the air to them: they can go by a roundabout path when they know the way.

It was an ante-chamber in an infinity. One became giddy there at looking forwards, and giddy at looking backwards, and there stood a crowd of anxious, pining beings, who were waiting and hoping for the time when the

gates of grace should be opened. They would have long to wait. Hideous, large, waddling spiders wove thousands of webs over their feet; and these webs were like gins or foot-screws, and held them as fast as chains of iron, and were a cause of disquiet to every soul—a painful annoyance. Misers stood there, and lamented that they had forgotten the keys of their money chests. It would be too tiresome to repeat all the complaints and troubles that were poured forth there. Inger thought it shocking to stand there like a statue; she was, as it were, fastened to the ground by the bread.

“This comes of wishing to have clean shoes,” said she to herself. “See how they all stare at me!”

Yes, they did all stare at her; their evil passions glared from their eyes, and spoke, without sound, from the corner of their mouths: they were frightful.

“It must be a pleasure to them to see me,” thought little Inger. “I have a pretty face and am well dressed;” and she dried her eyes. She had not lost her conceit. She had not then perceived how her fine clothes had been soiled in the brewhouse of the Old Woman of the Bogs. Her dress was covered with the

dabs of nasty matter; a snake had wound itself among her hair, and it dangled over her neck; and from every fold of her garment peeped out a toad, that puffed like an asthmatic lap-dog. It was very disagreeable. "But all the rest down here look horrid too," was the reflection with which she consoled herself.

But the worst of all was the dreadful hunger she felt. Could she not stoop down and break off a piece of the bread on which she was standing? No; her back was stiffened; her hands and her arms were stiffened; her whole body was like a statue of stone; she could only move her eyes, and these she could turn entirely round, and that was an ugly sight. And flies came and crept over her eyes backwards and forwards. She winked her eyes; but the intruders did not fly away, for they could not—their wings had been pulled off. That was another misery added to the hunger—the gnawing hunger that was so terrible to bear!

"If this goes on, I cannot hold out much longer," she said.

But she had to hold out, and her sufferings became greater.

Then a warm tear fell upon her head. It trickled over her face and her neck, all the

way down to the bread. Another tear fell, then many followed. Who was weeping over little Inger? Had she not a mother up yonder on the earth? The tears of anguish which a mother sheds over her erring child always reach it; but they do not comfort the child—they burn, they increase the suffering. And oh! this intolerable hunger; yet not to be able to snatch one mouthful of the bread she was treading under foot! She became as thin, as slender as a reed. Another trial was that she heard distinctly all that was said of her above on the earth, and it was nothing but blame and evil. Though her mother wept, and was in much affliction, she still said—

“Pride goes before a fall. That was your great fault, Inger. Oh, how miserable you have made your mother!”

Her mother and all who were acquainted with her were well aware of the sin she had committed in treading upon bread. They knew that she had sunk into the bog, and was lost; the cowherd had told that, for he had seen it himself from the brow of the hill.

“What affliction you have brought on your mother, Inger!” exclaimed her mother. “Ah, well! I expected no better from you.”

"Would that I had never been born!" thought Inger; "that would have been much better for me. My mother's whimpering can do no good now."

She heard how the family, the people of distinction who had been so kind to her, spoke. "She was a wicked child," they said; "she valued not the gifts of our Lord, but trod them under her feet. It will be difficult for her to get the gates of grace open to admit her."

"They ought to have brought me up better," thought Inger. "They should have taken the whims out of me, if I had any."

She heard that there was a common ballad made about her, "the bad girl who trod upon bread, to keep her shoes nicely clean," and this ballad was sung from one end of the country to the other.

"That any one should have to suffer so much for such as that—be punished so severely for such a trifle!" thought Inger. "All these others are punished justly, for no doubt there was a great deal to punish; but ah, how I suffer!"

And her heart became still harder than the substance into which she had been turned.

"No one can be better in such society. I

will not grow better here. See how they glare at me !”

And her heart became still harder, and she felt a hatred towards all mankind.

“They have a nice story to tell up there now. Oh, how I suffer !”

She listened, and heard them telling her history as a warning to children, and the little ones called her “ungodly Inger.” “She was so naughty,” they said, “so very wicked, that she deserved to suffer.”

The children always spoke harshly of her. One day, however, that hunger and misery were gnawing her most dreadfully, and she heard her name mentioned, and her story told to an innocent child—a little girl—she observed that the child burst into tears in her distress for the proud, finely-dressed Inger.

“But will she never come up again ?” asked the child.

The answer was :

“She will never come up again.”

“But if she will beg pardon, and promise never to be naughty again ?”

“But she will *not* beg pardon,” they said.

“Oh, how I wish she would do it !” sobbed the little girl in great distress. “I will give

my doll, and my doll's house too, if she may come up! It is so shocking for poor little Inger to be down there!"

These words touched Inger's heart; they seemed almost to make her good. It was the first time any one had said "poor Inger," and had not dwelt upon her faults. An innocent child cried and prayed for her. She was so much affected by this that she felt inclined to weep herself; but she could not, and this was an additional pain.

Years passed on in the earth above; but down where she was there was no change, except that she heard more and more rarely sounds from above, and that she herself was more seldom mentioned. At last one day she heard a sigh, and "Inger, Inger, how miserable you have made me! I foretold that you would!" These were her mother's last words on her death-bed.

And again she heard herself named by her former employers, and her mistress said—

"Perhaps I may meet you once more, Inger. None know whither they are to go."

But Inger knew full well that her excellent mistress would never come to the place where *she* was.

Time passed on, and on, slowly and wretchedly. Then once more Inger heard her name mentioned, and she beheld as it were, directly above her two clear stars shining. These were two mild eyes that were closing upon earth. So many years had elapsed since a little girl had cried in childish sorrow over "poor Inger," that that child had become an old woman, whom our Lord was now about to call to himself. At that hour, when the thoughts and the actions of a whole life stand in review before the parting soul, she remembered how, as a little child, she had wept bitterly on hearing the history of Inger. That time, and those feelings, stood so prominently before the old woman's mind in the hour of death, that she cried with intense emotion :

"Lord, my God! have not I often, like Inger, trod under foot Thy blessed gifts, and placed no value on them? Have I not often been guilty of pride and vanity in my secret heart? But Thou, in Thy mercy, didst not let me sink; Thou didst hold me up. Oh, forsake me not in my last hour!"

And the aged woman's eyes closed, and her spirit's eyes opened to what had been formerly invisible; and as Inger had been present in her

latest thoughts, she beheld her, and perceived how deep she had been dragged downwards. At that sight the gentle being burst into tears; and in the kingdom of heaven she stood like a child, and wept for the fate of the unfortunate Inger. Her tears and her prayers sounded like an echo down in the hollow form that confined the imprisoned, miserable soul. That soul was overwhelmed by the unexpected love from those realms afar. One of God's angels wept for her! Why was this vouchsafed to her? The tortured spirit gathered, as it were, into one thought, all the actions of its life—all that it had done; and it shook with the violence of its remorse—remorse such as Inger had never felt. Grief became her predominating feeling. She thought that for her the gates of mercy would never open, and as in deep contrition and self-abasement she thought thus, a ray of brightness penetrated into the dismal abyss—a ray more vivid and glorious than the sunbeams which thaw the snow figures that the children make in their gardens. And this ray, more quickly than the snowflake that falls upon a child's warm mouth can be melted into a drop of water, caused Inger's petrified figure to evaporate,

and a little bird arose, following the zigzag course of the ray, up towards the world that mankind inhabit. But it seemed afraid and shy of every thing around it; it felt ashamed of itself; and apparently wishing to avoid all living creatures, it sought, in haste, concealment in a dark recess in a crumbling wall. Here it sat, and it crept into the furthest corner, trembling all over. It could not sing, for it had no voice. For a long time it sat quietly there before it ventured to look out and behold all the beauty around. Yes, it was beauty! The air was so fresh, yet so soft; the moon shone so clearly; the trees and the flowers scented so sweetly; and it was so comfortable where she sat—her feather garb so clean and nice! How all creation told of love and glory! The grateful thoughts that awoke in the bird's breast she would willingly have poured forth in song, but the power was denied to her. Yes, gladly would she have sung as do the cuckoo and nightingale in spring. Our gracious Lord, who hears the mute worm's hymn of praise, understood the thanksgiving that lifted itself up in the tones of thought, as the psalm floated in David's mind before it resolved itself into words and melody

As weeks passed on, these unexpressed feelings of gratitude increased. They would surely find a voice some day, with the first stroke of the wing, to perform some good act. Might not this happen?

Now came the holy Christmas festival. The peasants raised a pole close by the old wall, and bound an unthrashed bundle of oats on it, that the birds of the air might also enjoy the Christmas, and have plenty to eat at that time which was held in commemoration of the redemption brought to mankind.

And the sun rose brightly that Christmas morning, and shone upon the oat-sheaf, and upon all the chirping birds that flew around the pole; and from the wall issued a faint twittering. The swelling thoughts had at last found vent, and the low sound was a hymn of joy, as the bird flew forth from its hiding-place.

The winter was an unusually severe one. The waters were frozen thickly over; the birds and the wild animals in the woods had great difficulty in obtaining food. The little bird, that had so recently left its dark solitude, flew about the country roads, and when it found by chance a little corn dropped in the ruts, it

would eat only a single grain itself, while it called all the starving sparrows to partake of it. It would also fly to the villages and towns and look well about; and where kind hands had strewed crumbs of bread outside the windows for the birds, it would eat only one morsel itself, and give all the rest to the others.

At the end of the winter the bird had found and given away so many crumbs of bread, that the number put together would have weighed as much as the loaf upon which little Inge had trodden in order to save her fine shoes from being soiled; and when she had found and given away the very last crumb, the gray wings of the bird became white, and expanded wonderfully.

“It is flying over the sea!” exclaimed the children who saw the white bird. Now it seemed to dip into the ocean, now it arose into the clear sunshine; it glittered in the air, it disappeared high, high above; and the children said that it had flown up to the sun.



THE OLD
OAK-TREE'S LAST DREAM

A CHRISTMAS TALE.

HERE stood in a wood, high up on the side of a sloping hill near the open shore, a very old oak-tree. It was about three hundred and sixty-five years old; but those long years were not more than as many single rotations of the earth for us men. We are awake during the day, and sleep during the night, and have then our dreams: with the tree it is otherwise. A tree is awake for three quarters of a year. It only sleeps in winter—that is *its* night—after the long day which is called spring, summer, and autumn.

Many a warm summer day had the ephemeron insect frolicked around the oak-tree's

head—lived, moved about, and found itself happy; and when the little creature reposed for a moment in calm enjoyment on one of the great fresh oak-leaves, the tree always said—

“Poor little thing! one day alone is the span of thy whole life. Ah, how short! It is very sad.”

“Sad!” the ephemeron always replied. “What dost thou mean by that? Every thing is so charming, so warm and delightful, that I am quite happy.”

“But for only one day; then all is over.”

“All is over!” exclaimed the insect. “What is the meaning of ‘all is over?’ Is all over with thee also?”

“No; I may live, perhaps, thousands of thy days, and my lifetime is for centuries. It is so long a period that thou couldst not calculate it.”

“No, for I do not understand thee. Thou hast thousands of my days; but I have thousands of moments to be happy in. Is all the beauty in the world at an end when thou diest?”

“Oh! no means,” replied the tree. “It will last longer—much, much longer than I can conceive.”

“Well, I think we are much on a par, only that we reckon differently.”

And the ephemeron danced and floated about in the sunshine, and enjoyed itself with its pretty little delicate wings, like the most minute flower—enjoyed itself in the warm air, which was so fragrant with the sweet perfumes of the clover-fields, of the wild roses in the hedges, and of the elder-flower, not to speak of the woodbine, the primrose, and the wild mint. The scent was so strong, that the ephemeron was almost intoxicated by it. The day was long and pleasant, full of gladness and sweet perceptions; and when the sun set, the little insect felt a sort of pleasing languor creeping over it after all its enjoyments. Its wings could no longer carry it, and very gently it glided down upon the soft blade of grass that was slightly waving in the evening breeze; there it drooped its tiny head, and fell into a calm sleep—the sleep of death.

“Poor little insect!” exclaimed the oak-tree, “thy life was far too short.”

And every summer's day were repeated a similar dance, a similar conversation, and a similar death. This went on with the whole generation of ephemera, and all were equally

happy, equally gay. The oak-tree remained awake during its spring morning, its summer day, and its autumn evening; now it was near its sleeping time, its night—the winter was close at hand.

Already the tempests were singing, “Good night, good-night! Thy leaves are falling—we pluck them!—we pluck them! Try if thou canst slumber; we shall sing thee to sleep, we shall rock thee to sleep; and thy old boughs like this—they are creaking in their joy! Softly, softly sleep! It is thy three hundred and sixty-fifth night. Sleep calmly! The snow is falling from the heavy clouds; it will soon be a wide sheet, a warm coverlet for thy feet. Sleep calmly and dream pleasantly!”

And the oak-tree stood disrobed of all its leaves to go to rest for the whole long winter, and during that time to dream many dreams, often something stirring and exciting, like the dreams of human beings.

It, too, had once been little. Yes, an acorn had been its cradle. According to man’s reckoning of time, it was now living in its fourth century. It was the strongest and loftiest tree in the wood, with its venerable head reared high above all the other trees; and it was seen

far away at sea, and looked upon as a beacon by the navigators of the passing ships. It little thought how many eyes looked out for it. High up amidst its green coronal the wood pigeons built their nests, and the cuckoo's note was heard from thence; and in the autumn, when the leaves looked like hammered plates of copper, came birds of passage, and rested there before they flew far over the sea. But now it was winter, and the tree stood leafless, and the bended and gnarled branches were naked. Crows and jackdaws came and sat themselves there alternately, and talked of the rigorous weather which was commencing, and how often difficult it was to find food in winter.

It was just at the holy Christmas time that the tree dreamt its most charming dream. Let us listen to it.

The tree had a distinct idea that it was a period of some solemn festival; it thought it heard all the church-bells round ringing, and it seemed to be a mild summer day. Its lofty head, it fancied, looked fresh and green, while the bright rays of the sun played among its thick foliage. The air was laden with the perfume of wild-flowers; various butterflies chased each other in sport around its boughs, and the ephemera

danced and amused themselves. All that during years the tree had known and seen around it, now passed before it as in a festive procession. It beheld, as in the olden time, knights and ladies on horseback, with feathers in their hats and falcons on their hands, riding through the greenwood; it heard the horns of the huntsmen, and the baying of the hounds; it saw the enemies' troops, with their various uniforms, their polished armor, their lances and halberds, pitch their tents and take them down again; the watch-fires blazed, and the soldiers sang and slept under the sheltering branches of the tree. It beheld lovers meet in the soft moonlight, and cut their names—that first letter—upon its olive-green bark. Guitars and Æolian harps were again—but there were very many years between them—hung up on the boughs of the tree by gay travelling swains, and again their sweet sounds broke on the stillness around. The wood-pigeons cooed, as if they were describing the feelings of the tree, and the cuckoo told how many summer days it should yet live.

Then it was as if a new current of life rushed from its lowest roots up to its highest branches, even to the furthest leaves; the tree

felt that it extended itself therewith, yet it perceived that its roots down in the ground were also full of life and warmth; it felt its strength increasing, and that it was growing taller and taller. The trunk shot up—there was no pause—more and more it grew—its head became fuller, broader—and as the tree grew it became happier, and its desire increased to rise up still higher, even until it could reach the warm, blazing sun.

Already had it mounted above the clouds, which, like multitudes of dark migratory birds, or flocks of white swans, were floating under it; and every leaf of the tree that had eyes could see. The stars became visible during the day, and looked so large and bright: each of them shone like a pair of mild, clear eyes. They might have recalled to memory dear, well-known eyes—the eyes of children—the eyes of lovers when they met beneath the tree.

It was a moment of exquisite delight. Yet in the midst of its pleasure it felt a desire, a longing that all the other trees in the wood beneath—all the bushes, plants, and flowers—might be able to lift themselves like it, and to participate in its joyful and triumphant feelings. The mighty oak-tree, in the midst of its

glorious dream, could not be entirely happy unless it had all its old friends with it, great and small; and this feeling pervaded every branch and leaf of the tree as strongly as if it had lived in the breast of a human being.

The summit of the tree moved about as if it missed and sought something left behind. Then it perceived the scent of the woodbine, and soon the still stronger scent of the violets and wild thyme; and it fancied it could hear the cuckoo repeat its note.

At length amidst the clouds peeped forth the tops of the green trees of the wood; they also grew higher and higher, as the oak had done; the bushes and the flowers shot up high in the air; and some of these, dragging their slender roots after them, flew up more rapidly. The birch was the swiftest among the trees: like a white flash of lightning it darted its slender stem upwards, its branches waving like green wreaths and flags. The wood and all its leafy contents, even the brown-feathered rushes, flew, and the birds followed them singing; and in the fluttering blades of silken grass the grass hopper sat and played with his wings against his long thin legs, and the wild bees hummed, and all was song and gladness as up in heaven.

"But the blue-bell and the little wild tansy," said the oak-tree; "I should like them with me too."

"We are with you," they sang in their low sweet tones.

"But the pretty water-lily of last year, and the wild apple-tree that stood down yonder, and looked so fresh, and all the forest flowers of years past, had they lived and bloomed till now, they might have been with me."

"We are with you—we are with you," sang their voices far above, as if they had gone up before.

"Well, this is quite enchanting," cried the old tree. "I have them all, small and great—not one is forgotten. How is all this happiness possible and conceivable?"

"In the celestial paradise all this is possible and conceivable," voices chanted around.

And the tree, which continued to rise, observed that its roots were loosening from their hold in the earth.

"This is well," said the tree. "Nothing now retains me. I am free to mount to the highest heaven—to splendor and light; and all that are dear to me are with me—small and great—all with me."

“All!”

This was the oak-tree's dream; and whilst it dreamt, a fearful storm had burst over sea and land that holy Christmas eve. The ocean rolled heavy billows on the beach—the tree rocked violently, and was torn up by the roots at the moment it was dreaming that its roots were loosening. It fell. Its three hundred and sixty-five years were now as but the day of the ephemeron.

On Christmas morning, when the sun arose, the storm was passed. All the church-bells were ringing joyously; and from every chimney, even the lowest in the peasant's cot, curled from the altars of the Druidical feast the blue smoke of the thanksgiving oblation. The sea became more and more calm, and on a large vessel in the offing, which had weathered the tempest during the night, were hoisted all its flags in honor of the day.

“The tree is gone—that old oak-tree, which was always our landmark!” cried the sailors “It must have fallen in the storm last night. Who shall replace it? Alas! no one can.”

This was the tree's funeral oration—short, but well meant—as it lay stretched at full length amidst the snow upon the shore, and

THE OLD OAK-TREE'S LAST DREAM.

over it floated the melody of the psalm-tunes from the ship— hymns of Christmas joy, and thanksgivings for the salvation of the souls of mankind by Jesus Christ, and the blessed promise of everlasting life.

“ Let sacred songs arise on high,
Loud hallelujahs reach the sky ;
Let joy and peace each mortal share,
While hymns of praise shall fill the air.”

Thus ran the old psalm, and every one out yonder, on the deck of the ship, lifted up his voice in thanksgiving and prayer, just as the old oak-tree was lifted up in its last and most delightful dream on that Christmas eve.



BACON'S ESSAYS The Complete Essays of

Lo
vol

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

Handy-



CLA

Sei
tyl

B 000 007 842 8

s, *First*

es, large

poems of

OLIVER GOLDSMITH,
ROBERT BURNS,
ALFRED TENNYSON,
JEAN INGELow,
GEORGE ELIOT,
SCHILLER,

S. T. COLERIDGE,
WM. E. AYTOUN,
LORD BYRON,
GOETHE,
EDGAR A. POE,
T. B. MACAULAY,

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

ELZEVIR CLASSICS. *Second Series.* Con-
taining Historical, Humorous, Biographical, Scientific,
and Legendary contributions (in a neat, large type, 342
pages, handsome cloth-bound volume), by the following
famous authors:

WASHINGTON IRVING,
DEAN SWIFT,
CANON F. W. FARRAR,
JAMES PARTON,
FRANK H. NORTON,

ANDREW WILSON,
ORPHEUS C. KERR,
S. BARING-GOULD,
W. MATTIEU WILLIAMS,
J. H. MERLE D'AUBIGNE,

AND OTHERS.

ELZEVIR CLASSICS. *Third Series.* A
neat, handy volume of 330 pages, large type, cloth bind-
ing, containing:

By GEORGE RAWLINSON.—The Civilizations of Asia.
By JOHN CAIRD.—Buddhism.
By CHARLES KINGSLEY. The Celtic Hermits.
By CUNNINGHAM GEIKIE.—The Crucifixion.
By FREDERICK W. FARRAR.—Seneca and St. Paul.
By CONYBEARE and HOWSON.—A Half Hour with St. Paul.
By FRANZ DELITZSCH.—Jesus and Hillel.
By F. GODET.—The Four Chief Apostles.
By MRS. MULLER.—Life of George Muller.

ELZEVIR CLASSICS. *Fourth Series.* A
neat, handy volume of 366 pages, large type, cloth bind-
ing, containing:

By HERBERT SPENCER.—The Coming Slavery. Philosophy
of Style.
By MATTHEW ARNOLD.—Numbers. Emerson.
By GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.—Wendell Phillips.
By WENDELL PHILLIPS.—The War for the Union.
By ROBERT GIFFEN.—Progress of the Working Classes.
By T. H. HUXLEY.—Evidences of Evolution.
By JOHN TYNDALL.—Count Rumford.
By EDWARD ORTON.—Public Health.

ANNABEL and OTHER POEMS. By

MRS. ELLEN P. ALLERTON. A dainty little volume of poems, some of which are already well known, which the author hopes may "serve to brighten homely toil with a touch of the ideal." 12mo., fine cloth, gilt top.

POEMS by H. W. LONGFELLOW. In

one 12mo. volume of 269 pages, Small Pica type, leaded. Fine cloth, red top.

POEMS by JOHN G. WHITTIER. In

one 12mo. volume of 319 pages. Small Pica type, leaded. Fine cloth, red top.

POEMS by WM. CULLEN BRYANT.

In one 12mo. volume, 347 pages, Small Pica type, leaded, Fine cloth, red top.

POETICAL CONCORDANCE. A Concise

Poetical Concordance to the principal poets of the world, embracing titles, first lines, characters, subjects, and quotations. Compiled by CHARLES A. DURFEE, compiler of the Index to Harpers' Magazine, 1850 to 1880, and other works. 639 pages, large 12mo., Bourgeois and Nonpareil type. Library edition, plain cloth, also bound in extra cloth, gilt edges, ornamented.

The best existing key to the literature embodied in the poetical works of the following world-famous authors :

Edwin Arnold,
William E. Aytoun,
Mrs. E. B. Browning,
William Cullen Bryant,
Thomas Campbell,
Geoffrey Chaucer,
S. T. Coleridge,
William Cowper,
George Crabbe,
John Dryden,
J. W. Von Goethe,
Oliver Goldsmith,
Mrs. Hemans,
George Herbert,
Oliver Wendell Holmes,
Jean Ingelow,
Henry W. Longfellow,
James Russell Lowell,
T. B. Macaulay,

Owen Meredith,
John Milton,
Homer's Iliad,
Homer's Odyssey,
Ossian,
Adelaide Proctor,
D. G. Rossetti,
Schiller,
William Shakespeare,
P. B. Shelley,
Edmund Spencer,
Henry Taylor,
Alfred Tennyson,
James Thomson,
Virgil,
Charles Wesley,
John G. Whittier,
N. P. Willis,
William Wordsworth.

ROBERT BURNS. The Poetical Works of

Robert Burns, with Introduction, Biography, and Notes. Complete in three volumes of 353, 330, and 356 pages. Bourgeois type, leaded. Bound in fine cloth, red edges; also bound in full Russia, gilt edges.

SCOTT'S COMPLETE WORKS. *New*

Library Edition, on large paper, finely printed from new plates, giving all the original notes, introductions, and glossaries. Illustrated. Complete in 23 volumes. Over 11,000 pages, small 8vo., extra cloth, beveled boards, gilt tops. Volumes sold separately.

- | | |
|---|--|
| Vol. 1. Waverley, | Vol. 12. Rob Roy, The Black Dwarf, |
| " 2. Woodstock, | " 13. The Abbot, |
| " 3. Kennilworth, | " 14. Fortunes of Nigel, |
| " 4. St. Ronan's Well, | " 15. Count Robert of Paris, |
| " 5. Guy Mannering, | " 16. Red Gauntlet, |
| " 6. Anne of Geierstein, | " 17. The Pirate, |
| " 7. Heart of Midlothian, | " 18. Fair Maid of Perth, |
| " 8. Ivanhoe, | " 19. The Antiquary, |
| " 9. Bride of Lammermoor, Surgeon's Daughter, | " 20. Peverill of the Peak, |
| " 10. Legend of Montrose, Talisman, | " 21. The Betrothed, Castle Dangerous, |
| " 11. Monastery, Chronicles of the Canongate, | " 22. Old Mortality, Keepsake Stories, |
| | " 23. Quentin Durward. |

DICKENS'S COMPLETE WORKS.

New Library Edition, over 150 illustrations, on large paper. Over 12,000 pages, complete in 15 small octavo volumes, extra cloth, beveled boards, gilt tops. Volumes sold separately.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Pickwick Papers, | 11 Tale of Two Cities, and Sketches by Boz, |
| 2 David Copperfield, | 12 Barnaby Rudge, and Mystery of Edwin Drood, |
| 3 Martin Chuzzlewit, | 13 Great Expectations, Uncommercial Traveller, and Miscellaneous, |
| 4 Nicholas Nickleby, | 14 Christmas Stories, and Reprinted Pieces, |
| 5 Bleak House, | 15 Child's History of England, and Miscellaneous. |
| 6 Little Dorrit, | |
| 7 Dombey and Son, | |
| 8 Our Mutual Friend, | |
| 9 Oliver Twist, Pictures from Italy, & American Notes, | |
| 10 Old Curiosity Shop, | |

PROSE TALES of EDGAR A. POE.

In one handsome large 12mo. volume of 712 pages, Long Primer type. Fine cloth binding. This volume contains the following famous stories:

THE NARRATIVE OF A. GORDON PYM.
THE GOLD BUG, and OTHER TALES.
THE ASSIGNATION, and OTHER TALES.
THE MURDER in the RUE MORGUE, and OTHER TALES.

PELVIC and HERNIAL THERAPEUTICS.

Principles and Methods for Remedying Chronic Affections of the Lower Part of the Trunk, including Processes for Self-Cure. By DR. GEORGE H. TAYLOR. Large 12mo., Long Primer type, fine cloth, red edges.